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CONTENTS

	Page
COMMENTS	441
ANOTHER GREAT ILLUSION	443
TALKING TRADE WITH RUSSIA. By Maurice Edelman, M.P.	444
NATIONAL CRIME. By Sagittarius	444
A LONDON DIARY. By Critic	445
THIS ENGLAND	445
WHO GOES HOME? By H. N. Brailsford	446
LAYMEN AND LAWYERS. By C. H. Rolph	447
WHAT THEY PROMISED. By Mikhail Zoshchenko	447
THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT:	Page
The Theatre. By T. C. Worsley	448
Passmore at the Redfern. By Patrick Heron	448
Mam'selle Angot and Others. By Beryl de Zoete	448
The Movies. By William Whitebait	449
Radio Notes. By Henry Reed	449
CORRESPONDENCE	450
From K. Zilliacus, M.P.; Ben Parkin, M.P.; Geoffrey Bing, M.P.; The Rev. H. Alexander; Howard Diamond; and C. M. Woodhouse.	
	Page
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By Raymond Mortimer	453
REVIEWS:	
The Dark Passage. By G. W. Stonier	454
Variations on the China Theme. By Dorothy Woodman	454
New Novels. By Walter Allen	455
Religion and Society. By Philip Toynbee	456
Man in a Laughing Mask. By John Waller	457
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS	458

LESSON FOR THE TORIES

ALREADY the statisticians are busily at work analysing the results of the "little general election," and seeking to find in them indications of national trends. Such research, though necessarily speculative, is often illuminating. In a letter, for instance, from Mr. Geoffrey Bing, which we publish on another page, there is much which the Liberal Party can study with profit, if not with enthusiasm. Moreover, comparison between the by-election and municipal figures confirms the conclusion, which we reached in these columns a few weeks ago, that the anti-Socialist victory achieved by Lord Woolton gave no reliable indication of how the same electors would vote in a Parliamentary election.

In Gravesend it must be remembered that only about half the constituency was covered by the municipal elections, and that the areas not included were predominantly Conservative. But with this qualification the figures remain illuminating.

By-election.		Municipal.	
Labour	24,692	Labour	11,466
Conservative	23,017	Conservative	22,852

Equally important is the contrast between the Gallup figures, showing how people said they *would* vote *if* there were an election, and the actual results in the three by-elections. It is clear that the election campaign itself changed the minds of many voters. Submitted to three weeks of intensive political education, thousands of people seem to have reconsidered their attitude. When the voters began to reflect on their irritation at austerity, and to consider seriously the possibility of a Churchill Government, thousands of them flinched at the prospect. They were prepared to express resentment in municipals; but when brought to the test under the arc lights of world publicity, they still found that they preferred Mr. Attlee to Mr. Churchill.

So much can be stated with confidence about the Gravesend result. But to go on from there and to draw conclusions from one by-election about what would happen in a general election deflects attention from the real importance of Gravesend—its immediate effect on both Government and Opposition.

What mattered at Gravesend was not trends and tendencies, but victory or defeat. British politics, with grave injustice to smaller parties, have always been a contest of heavyweights, and the British people have treated elections, very wisely, not as public opinion polls, to be adjudicated on points, but as contests for power in which the knock-out is the only satisfactory result. At Gravesend the Government knocked the Opposition out of the ring and regained faith in itself. Once again Mr. Churchill, duped by his own magnificent phrases, found that the working class prefers its bread and butter to Tory slogans.

One immediate consequence will be a revival of the dispute between the Churchillians and the Reformers inside the Tory Party. At Gravesend the phrases which won the municipals were repeated by Mr. Taylor, but with dwindling confidence as each day passed. Churchillian rhetoric, so captivating at Westminster, sounds tawdry and even unpatriotic when measured against the achievements of the mineworkers and the steelworkers, the equality of the rationing system and the absence of unemployment.

In the inquest which is now taking place on Lord Woolton's failure, Mr. Butler and Mr. Macmillan will press home their argument that an educated electorate is entitled to something better than hot air. Mr. Churchill is the chief electoral asset of both sides. His personality still wins votes for a party without a policy, but by emphasising the absence of policy it provides the Labour Party with its best talking-point. Gravesend will confirm thoughtful Tories in the view that they can have no hope of office until Sinbad gets rid of the Grand Old Man of the Sea.

The Struggle in France

Dust still hangs thick over the French political arena; it is difficult as yet to discern whether the strikes will be "settled," or how much will be left of Parliamentary democracy in France when the battle is over. In many respects the conflict conforms to a classical pattern. In conditions of inflation, acute poverty and food shortage, the nice balance of Parliamentary parties becomes increasingly precarious, a would-be dictator finds wide support among the middle classes, half-disguised support from the Right, and militant opposition from the Left—leaving a middle party of reason and moderation desperately seeking a compromise. Strikes for higher pay are demanded by the workers, and the Communist Party, which is in command of the C.G.T., is anxious to make itself the spokesman of economic demands which increasingly take on a political character. There is no evidence that the Communists had planned or are trying to carry through a revolution. If Moscow has sent directives, we do not know what they are. It may be Moscow hopes by a revolutionary policy to forestall American influence in Western Europe, but it is surely obvious that the policy of a general strike is likely to hurry Congressional aid for the Right wing in France. This is inconsistent with the clear intention of the Communist Party throughout Europe to wreck the Marshall Plan. A definite political issue was raised openly by the general strike committee only when the Government introduced its draft anti-strike legislation and refused the demand of the C.G.T. that withdrawal of the Bills should be a condition precedent to further negotiations on the wage issue. With the help of troops, tanks and tear-gas, a Right-wing Government is succeeding in maintaining some essential services and keeping some trains running. Empty pockets and empty bellies seem to be leading to some return to work, and may lead to more; but there is little evidence that the solidarity of the strike has been broken, and there is at least a possibility that it may spread to more, non-Communist, unions and also to lead to more serious bloodshed. M. Schuman seems bent on forcibly breaking the strike. His anti-strike legislation, outdoing the Taft-Hartley Act in drastic penalties for opposing the right to work, has shocked both non-Communist elements in the C.G.T. and the Socialist Party, which has been making unsuccessful efforts to persuade the Premier to postpone his legislation and to make a more acceptable offer to the strikers. Indeed, the Socialist Minister of Labour, M. Daniel Mayer, appears

to have been personally carrying on separate negotiations with the C.G.T. The Socialists are in an intolerable dilemma. Unless they are prepared to be absorbed by the Communists, they must seek an increasingly difficult middle way. Inevitably they split into groups. Their Right wing, which accepted office with M. Schuman, is in effect Gaulliste. A small Left wing is prepared to work with the Communists; the centre desperately seeks a compromise settlement. M. Schuman so far appears to have been adamant, and to have told Socialist leaders that their participation is not indispensable. He is reported to have declared that he will accept from the C.G.T. nothing but unconditional surrender. There is an obvious danger that France will drift into authoritarian government and civil war unless the Socialists can persuade M. Schuman to settle the strikes by an improved wage offer and to use Marshall aid to stabilise prices.

Socialists at Antwerp

The International Socialist Conference has ended in at least a negative success: it has done nothing to widen the divergence between Eastern and Western Socialist Parties. Unity, however, was maintained by a series of compromises. The Conference would have nothing to do with the proposal of the guest delegate from the United States Socialist Party, that there should be an entirely new International of "all truly democratic Socialists" in opposition to "the totalitarians of the Right and so-called Left." In the programme which the Conference endorsed, the main points were that the unification of Europe (including Germany) is the first condition of peace, and that "the need and usefulness" of American aid is recognised in relation to "the co-operation of European countries essential to the restoration of European economy," with the proviso that no aid can be accepted "which carries with it any political or social subordination, or which threatens the chances of Socialist reform in the countries helped." Even this non-committal resolution, however, did not satisfy the Dutch, who seemed to want a declaration from the Conference that there could be no collaboration between Social-Democracy and Communism; and the Poles, Italians and Hungarians were not prepared to vote for even such a guarded approval of the Marshall Plan. The Conference, against the votes of the Czechs, Poles, Hungarians and the Palestine Labour Political Committee (with the Italians and the Jewish Socialists abstaining) decided to admit a German Social-Democratic delegation to future international Socialist Conferences. The question of forming a definite "Socialist International," from whose membership the Eastern Socialists would almost certainly have excluded themselves, and to whose policy resolutions the British Labour Party hesitated to commit itself, was pigeon-holed. Instead, it was decided that the existing Information and Liaison Office in London should be enlarged and that a steering committee should meet from time to time between Conferences to consider and, presumably, issue statements about the situation.

The Music Goes Round and Round

The Big Four Conference is still in being; and that is something. The U.S. delegation appears to have revised its original idea that ten days should be sufficient to "make or break." But though discussions continue, circling round and round without visibly approaching the main points of difference, little concrete progress towards agreement can yet be registered. The Ministers' deputies have once more looked at the draft Austrian treaty and handed it back to the Big Four. As for Germany, the most contentious items on the agenda—those dealing with reparations and the economic future of Germany—have not been touched. A week has been spent in debating the so-called "political" items—how many countries should participate in framing the German peace treaty or should be consulted as to its terms; whether the treaty itself should be written into the eventual constitution of Germany; and whether the establishment of a central German Government should precede the conclusion of the treaty. Throughout, Mr. Molotov has been endeavouring to manœuvre Mr. Marshall and Mr. Bevin into a position in which they must either affirm or explicitly deny their intention to establish a Western German Government if the present Conference fails to reach agreement on the constitution, economic future and obligations of a unitary Reich. That such plans exist is an open secret; and M. Bidault appears to have committed France to incorporating the French Zone with Bizonia in the event of a provisional Western German Government being established at Frankfurt. Mr. Molotov is doubtless aware of all this; but he has so far failed to persuade the other three Ministers to "come clean." They, in their turn, are aware that Mr. Molotov is out to find supporting evidence for the thesis that the U.S.S.R. is alone in championing the cause of a United Germany.

A Little Done

The passage of the Bill for interim aid to France, Italy and Austria through the Senate by so striking a majority was a preliminary triumph for the bi-partisan foreign policy worked out between Senator Vandenberg and Secretary Marshall. That the Bill should have been supported by such diverse elements as Senator Taft, Senator Pepper at the other extreme, and Senator Brooks of Illinois, who is generally regarded as Colonel McCormick's mouthpiece, shows that there were not even votes to be gained by opposing this measure of relief to those parts of Europe most immediately "threatened by Communism." The House is not likely to pass the Bill for about two weeks, and there may then be conferences which will delay its final passage till Christmas. But these delays are only tactical; the Bill will go through because no one dares to take the responsibility for wrecking the whole basis of American foreign policy. The most significant amendment likely to be pressed in the House is that which would divert some aid from Europe to China. This represents a revival of the old battle between the Pacific-firsters and the Europe-firsters which raged between Pearl Harbour and D-Day. General Marshall was then of the opinion that America's interests were more vitally concerned in Europe, and his abortive attempt to solve the Chinese civil war has further convinced him that to give aid to Chiang Kai-shek would be pouring money down a rat-hole. But the Luce papers—*Time* and *Life*—have employed William Bullitt to go to China and prove to their five million readers that America is betraying a loyal anti-Communist ally. If American aid is regarded as designed purely to buttress defences against Communism, then China is as worthy of help as Greece or Turkey. The vote on this issue should be a good test of how far Marshall has succeeded in setting Congress on a positive programme of recovery, and weaning it away from the negativism of the Truman doctrine.

Palestine After the Decision

The surprising suggestion that the two-thirds majority for partition was the result of improper American pressure, was made by the B.B.C. as well as by many newspapers. It is disproved by an analysis of the voting. The main body of support for the Unscop proposals came from the British Dominions—all of them, with the exception of Pakistan, voted "yes"—and from Europe, where the sole country to vote "no" was Greece, and the only abstainer, Yugoslavia. On the other hand, of the Latin-American bloc, where American pressure is often decisive, six abstained and Cuba voted "no." There can therefore be no doubt that world opinion has confirmed the analysis of the Peel Commission that the Mandate is unworkable, and has chosen as the lesser of two evils the creation of a Jewish Commonwealth in part of Palestine. But how is that Commonwealth to be established, with the British Government obstinately neutral, and with the Americans and the Russians unwilling to replace the British Army by an international police force? As it stands, the Uno decision is a direct incitement to both sides to accomplish their ends by force. It tells the Jews that they will be permitted to achieve independence within the frontiers laid down by the Assembly only if they can by their own military strength enforce their authority in the areas allotted to them. Equally, the Arabs are told that if they can frustrate the Jews by violence, Uno will do nothing to stop them. Already, rioting has begun, and British troops and policemen, after thirty months of cold war against the Jews, are once again compelled to change sides. Since the Haganah is still an illegal army, Britain has the sole responsibility for maintaining law and order and for suppressing the Arab mob. This shows the futility of the Cabinet's effort to maintain "neutrality" in the last months of the Mandate. Whether partition is accomplished without the devastation of Palestine depends on the British attitude between now and next autumn. Mr. Bevin can so organise the evacuation as to assist the two nations in establishing the machinery of government in their respective areas. On the other hand, he can so organise it as to intensify the confusion. In the former case he will, in fact, be imposing partition at the very last moment and in the most difficult circumstances; in the latter, he will be destroying Palestine, presumably in the hope of thereby winning the approval of the Arab League. That this hope is vain is proved by the statement of the Secretary-General condemning "British pusillanimity" in the strongest terms. Thus our stubborn refusal to accept the Uno decision has brought us no advantage. Indeed, it has merely aggravated the difficulties and dangers of withdrawal.

Saving Dollars

On Tuesday the Treasury made the disquieting announcement that during November British sales of gold amounted to £48 millions, and that £15 millions' worth of dollars were also purchased from the International Monetary Fund. In the past three months total sales of gold and drawings of dollars from the Fund have totalled £163 millions; and, in addition, we have drawn over £20 millions from the unexpended portion of the Canadian credit. That is to say, the gap in the sterling area's balance of payments on dollar account is still running at the ruinous rate of £700 millions a year. How much of this is attributable to Britain's deficit and how much to that of the Dominions and other sterling countries is not disclosed; but it is a fair inference that our own efforts to win the "battle of the gap" have not yet achieved measurable success, in spite of the fact that the total cuts announced in our import programme (including the ban on tourist expenditure) amount to £330 millions. The details announced this week of the proposed cuts in capital expenditure suggest that by these means an attempt is being made, not so much to save dollars by reducing imports, as to concentrate more steel and man-power in the dollar-earning export trades. The cost, in terms of deferring improvements in British plant and transport facilities, will be heavy. A still more serious feature in the situation is that, unless we both economise in dollar expenditure by the Government on foreign commitments and at the same time endeavour to diminish our present dependence on the dollar area for essential imports, shortage of dollars seems likely to compel us to make still further cuts in our import programme of foodstuffs. It is much to be hoped that the resumption of trade negotiations with the U.S.S.R. will lead to an agreement whereby we can meet part of our wheat requirements from the Soviet Union. It would also be encouraging to hear of progress in the protracted Anglo-Yugoslav trade negotiations and in the so far abortive talks with Denmark.

PARLIAMENT: Murder Most Foul

Wednesday

ALTHOUGH the Debate on the Criminal Justice Bill provoked strong personal differences, it was free from party divisions. The only hint of political affiliations was the insistence of some Tories that prison must not be made too comfortable. Both General Jeffreys and Peake told stories designed to prove that the more reckless elements of the working classes always endeavour to get accommodation in prison for the winter, which Labour members took to be a condemnation of the Tory pre-war housing record. Peake even went so far as to quote an old school friend's comment that his life in prison was not much different from that at his public school. One gathered, from his account of his own gaol experiences, that Gallacher thereby found an additional, and non-Marxist, reason for being glad that he had dispensed with a bourgeois education.

Chuter Ede's introduction was comprehensive and lucid. His reason for voting against capital punishment in 1938, but supporting it now, was that crimes of violence in the post-war world were becoming more popular. We have more gun-men than ever before. In 1938 there were only 97 murders; in 1946 there were 138. This was not the time to remove the bollows—an argument which Paget later turned to show that on the Home Secretary's own evidence capital punishment was scarcely proving a deterrent to murder. On balance the anti-hangers outnumbered those in favour, with Maude standing somewhere in between. Maude, who has more experience as a criminal lawyer than anyone else in the House, made a moving speech, laying open all the miseries to which a sensitive barrister is subject. He could see, more clearly than was comfortable for him, the sufferings of the condemned, and yet at the same time he recognised sharply the necessity to discourage them from committing their crimes. In the end he could only be definite on one of the provisions of the Bill. It was wrong to take away the discretion of Magistrates as to whether or no they will record a conviction. Magistrates ought to be able to say to a first offender "Go away and forget all about it." Others agreed, pointing out that a recorded conviction follows a man all his life, particularly if he emigrates.

Scholefield Allen urged that unemployment cards should be kept up to date for prisoners and Hector Hughes sensibly argued that they should be given useful, productive employment whilst imprisoned. He also advanced the suggestion, attractive to many, that there should be two degrees of murder. The killing of an imbecile child by a devoted parent is, for instance, in a different category to the planned and gradual murder by poison. Perhaps, of the speeches on the capital punishment controversy, Paget's was the best. With exciting detail he curdled the blood of the House with accounts of those who have been hanged and later proved incontrovertibly innocent. Execution was so very definite and mistakes could not be rectified. Hanging, in some cases, even stimulates murders among the morbidly sensational, who like the publicity. In others, a man who has committed one murder, possibly by accident, commits another to give the impression of insanity and so avoid the death penalty. This, probably, was what Heath had done. His convincing arguments will undoubtedly win support for the anti-hangers when the necessary amendment comes before the House on the Report stage—although some members, otherwise in agreement, would like to see death retained as the ultimate sanction against traitors.

Winding up was a difficult task for a new junior Minister, but Younger performed it well and dealt with a fair cross-section of the many, and often legally complicated, points raised. He may have been encouraged by the unaccustomed mildness of Winterton, whose politeness took him as far as saying that Chuter Ede, in spite of his politics, had administered the Home Office so well as to be a benefit to the nation.

On Tuesday the Committee stage of the Finance Bill had an uneventful opening. Sir Stafford was prodded into a slightly firmer declaration of hostility against the "bookies," and Sir Thomas Moore wanted the purchase tax off cosmetics to encourage professional women. Members who had hoped to score heavily with their Division records were disappointed.

PHINEAS TERTIUS

ANOTHER GREAT ILLUSION

IN a Sunday night broadcast that, like a serial story, left us suspended at the most interesting moment, Sir Norman Angell expounded with force and reason a simple—too simple—thesis. He argued that the first two world wars could both have been prevented if Germany had known beyond doubt that both Britain and America would from the outset use all their power to aid the victims of her aggression. Similarly, Sir Norman argued, a third world war with Russia can be prevented if the Soviet Union knows that the English-speaking Powers are solidly united to resist aggression, but ready to live side by side with the U.S.S.R. and allow her peaceably to develop her own radically different social system within her own orbit. He feared that some Socialists in this country were again making war more probable by talking of the possible neutrality of England. He concluded that peace depended on the solidarity of America and the British Commonwealth.

If Russia were really in doubt that in the event of war Britain and America would unite against her, Sir Norman's point would be important. It is true that war might arise from Soviet overconfidence, just as it might arise from reckless action on the part of the United States in China or Greece. But we doubt whether the efforts of Socialists to prevent Britain and Western Europe from becoming too far dependent on America is in the least likely to mislead the rulers of Soviet Russia. They tend, on the contrary, to go to the opposite extreme in assuming that Britain is economically and politically a satellite of America, and to accept the view of American strategists who hold that Britain has now little importance except as an unsinkable aircraft-carrier for American bombers. The Soviet Union must be well aware that many who are to-day fellow-travellers, and probably many who are avowed Communists, would, as Sir Norman suggests, find, when put to the test of foreign invasion, that they preferred to fight rather than to surrender either their civil liberties or their national independence. Indeed, in any country that has a tradition of liberal democracy and civil liberty, the overwhelming majority of the people, including the politically conscious working class, will resist Communism if it reaches them, not as a national movement of liberation, but as an instrument of Soviet domination. It is scarcely possible that Moscow can be under any illusion that war with the United States in Europe would also involve Great Britain.

The argument of those who desire an independent policy for Britain and Western Europe does not rest on any such flimsy basis as Sir Norman seems to imagine. The proposition advanced in these columns, for instance, has been that a third independent Western European group is possible and desirable; that Western Europe (as the Paris plan for the Marshall programme made clear) will need close commercial relations with Eastern Europe, as well as vast American aid; and that the formation of such an independent group would give us a chance of preventing a war which complacent acceptance of the present plans of the Combined Chiefs of Staff would seem to make almost inevitable.

Sir Norman seems to suffer from the common delusion that Stalin is merely Hitler writ large. All the evidence goes to show that Russia does not intend war, and we know that in her devastated condition she is not ready for it. The Soviet Union well knows that while she could fight a defensive war of unlimited duration, which might or might not end in some form of primitive Communism being established over the whole of the Eurasian land bloc, she is not capable of attacking America, nor is she in a position to prevent her centres of population and industry being wiped out by American bombers. The United States, on the other hand, is technically equipped to make war on Russia only in the sense of inflicting limitless destruction; America could not defeat the Soviet Union, nor occupy its vast territory, nor, in war, prevent Russia from occupying China or the European Continent. Nor could the U.S. deal with the rising of coloured peoples in all parts of the world who in such a war would respond to Soviet and not to American propaganda. Thus, in spite of the vituperations emanating from the Moscow propaganda machine and the bellicose and often hysterical counterblasts from America, war between these two giants seems not immediately probable. Rather we are living in an interval during which both countries are seeking to improve their ideological and strategic positions while making technical preparations for a third world war. In this breathless breathing-space we are especially concerned with the dilemma of millions of people who do not wholly belong to either camp and who lack the fanaticism to prepare for a purely destructive war.

Perhaps it is long residence on the other side of the Atlantic that has prevented Sir Norman from discerning just what is involved in the solidarity with the United States which he regards as the sole security against war. On the military and strategic side America and the British Commonwealth are already closely knit. The combined General Staff works unobtrusively in Washington. There is no similar economic general staff. The Truman Doctrine, which is the political expression of American strategy, seeks to uphold every anti-Soviet régime or political group around the vast periphery of the U.S.S.R. Therefore, on the assumption of solidarity with America, we in Britain are committed to take the American side and, if necessary, to fight together with the United States in the case of any dispute arising in the Far East, and to make common cause with any of the sheiks and semi-Fascists who rule from the Indian Ocean to the Acropolis. Further, we must support clerical Fascism in Italy and France, and, presumably, any new form of anti-Soviet National Socialism that is born in an American-sponsored Germany. This is the logic of a policy which is based on informing the Soviet Union that America and Britain are solidly in alliance. It is a logic from which Sir Norman Angell would, we are sure, withdraw in horror. If the United States and Russia quarrel in Korea, is Sir Norman sure that Britain must mobilise? If trouble begins in the Middle East, does Sir Norman see no reason why any Englishman should object to the thesis that the Forces of Britain should be expendable until such time as the United States, which is not now prepared to keep troops in the Middle East, would be prepared to liberate territories that Russia had overrun? Having considered these propositions, Sir Norman may agree that British Socialists who seek an independent policy may not be altogether scatterbrained.

At the present stage of this vast dispute between Soviet Communism and American capitalism, in which neither side contemplates an immediate war, the crux is economic rather than military. One statesmanlike utterance has come from the United States since the death of President Roosevelt. Mr. Marshall's Harvard speech was welcomed by the whole Western world, and it would have been welcomed in Eastern Europe too, if Moscow had permitted. The question is whether Western capitalism proves capable of acting with the foresight involved in Mr. Marshall's proposal. The rules of Russia hold that America will not be able to supply the basis of economic stability and development which would enable the nations of Western Europe to rebuild their shattered economies, and that, under social democratic leadership, these countries are themselves quite incapable of reaching that measure of economic and political agreement that the Communist Party, under the leadership of men like Tito and Dimitrov, is able to create among the countries of Eastern Europe. But while holding theoretically that an American slump and an in-

creasing European chaos will aid the spread of Communism, Moscow is clearly afraid that Marshall aid will be sufficient to support the Truman Doctrine; it will be enough, that is to say, to put reaction into power throughout Western Europe and develop it as an anti-Soviet base.

No one can say just how adequate the amount of American aid will be or how tight or numerous the political strings. For Western Europe itself —and we include Britain—the question is all-important. If America regards us as mainly a strategic area in which to fight Russia, and the U.S.S.R., fearing America, blocks all agreement and fosters a revolutionary policy which breeds counter-revolution, then we are indeed between the upper and nether millstones. Our efforts must surely be directed towards maintaining a Western Socialism capable of developing an independent life and of bargaining both economically and politically with an Eastern Europe which needs our goods as much as we need its food. American policy may make this programme difficult, but, if we are determined, it will accept our will to maintain our independence, even if on a low standard of life. If, however, the U.S.S.R. treats all Social Democracy as hostile, then inevitably we shall be driven into greater dependence on America, and the Soviet Union will once again have proved that men often so act as to produce the evil they fear.

TALKING TRADE WITH RUSSIA

You remember what happened to the kind Peter Bell:

> He touched the hem of Nature's shift,
> Felt faint, and did not dare uplift,
> The closest, all-concealing tunic.

Like Peter, the President of the Board of Trade. After he had laboriously unwrapped the veiling difficulties of Russian trade, he swooned at the last moment with the pact unconsummated. Whether he will have greater success at his present try depends on whether the inhibiting circumstances of last summer disappear. Wilson, encouraged by Cripps, has an unqualified wish to do business with Russia. But in foreign trade it takes four to make a bargain—the foreign Government, the Board of Trade, the Treasury and the Foreign Office.

Do the Russians really want to trade? There are those who believe that the Russian negotiations are merely designed for propaganda purposes, to dangle timber and wheat before the British public, and irritate it with its Government. They explain Stalin's protestation of his interest in Anglo-Soviet trade in the same way. Those who hold that view will never believe that Russia, like any other Power, is often moved by the simple motive of material self-interest. During the last Moscow negotiations the Russians asked for rails, light locomotives, excavators, timber-felling and saw-mill machinery and so on. They need this equipment, as important to them as coalmining machinery to us, in order to develop a great national industry. To supply their domestic needs and have an export surplus, they must open up new forest areas in the North and in Siberia; provide for the timber to be partially "converted" on the site; and have facilities for it to be hauled to the ports. Without the help of British machinery, the Russian timber industry will continue to lag. In Moscow, the Russians offered Wilson 53,000 standards of timber (enough to build 33,000 houses) for delivery in 1947. We have now forfeited that quantity. Archangel port will be iced-up till next spring. But the offer of 53,000 standards was in itself a mark of sincerity, since, in the present state of the Soviet timber industry, it could only be offered to us by depriving the devastated areas of Russia of a similar quantity. In other words, as in 1931, when the Russians starved but exported butter, they are today ready to sell timber which they need for the sake of the longer-term advantage of restoring their timber industry with the proceeds of the sale. As for the 1,000,000 tons of grain, half of it wheat, the Russians can offer it for sale because it is a genuine surplus already available. The normal ports of shipment are Odessa and Novorossisk, so that an early agreement could mean prompt deliveries. If the Russians had any reservation about a trade agreement, it was not about their own decision or ability to deliver, but rather about the delivery date of the British equipment. Before the war, the Soviet Export Trust were proud of their claim that they hadn't defaulted either in deliveries or in payments—a sort of "Stalin never owes." They are now asking for severe "penalty" clauses in order to obtain a guarantee of delivery. Onerous though these clauses are, they can be made inoperative if the Government gives the British exporting firms concerned a high priority for materials. The workers will do the rest.

Since August 1st, when the Russians paid only half of the £2,400,000 which they were due to pay under the 1941 Civil Supplies Agreement, the Treasury and the Foreign Office have worn an "I-told-you-so" look. If this partial default by the Russians gives an excuse for those who don't want an Anglo-Soviet Trade Pact anyhow, it shouldn't be regarded as an indication that the Russians don't want it. They claim that they were withholding the rest of the sum due, in the expectation of a favourable revision of repayment terms. As we know from our own experience—and the Treasury needs no reminder—there are times when a financially hard-pressed country has to ask its creditors for its financial obligations to be modified. The Russians wanted a reduction of the rate of interest under the 1941 agreement to ½ per cent., the waiving of their obligation to pay 40 per cent. of advances still falling due in cash, and an adjustment in terms of repayment to spread payments over 12 years instead of five. They pointed out that those variants would involve a settlement with Russia comparable with the British settlement of France's debt last year. Britain conceded most of the Russian claims, but, as Sir Stafford Cripps said in the House of Commons on July 25th, 1947:

"The concessions we were prepared to make involved us in a heavy loss in the next three or four years, and in view of our serious overseas financial position, we could not meet what the Soviet Government, after moving some way to meet us, stated were their minimum terms."

The financial difference between the British and Soviet variants of the Civil Supplies Agreement of 1941 was summarised by Glenvil Hall in a Parliamentary reply on November 3rd. "The variants," he said, "proposed by the Soviet Committee of Foreign Trade and the Secretary for Overseas Trade would mean losses on capital repayment of £34 and £26 millions respectively, during the next six years, to be recouped over the following ten years. Both variants involve a final loss of interest of about £4,000,000."

From the point of view of the Treasury, the breakdown of negotiations over a difference of £8,000,000 now or later is understandable. From the point of view of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, it must be deplorable. During the King's Speech Debate, he said, in justification of building "cuts," that we must get timber from dollar sources. The prices of this timber have been rising since the Moscow negotiations, and the increase must be added to the loss which we have incurred as a result of the breakdown in the Moscow negotiations. If, on the other hand, we bridge the now small financial gap, we can have timber from its traditional source—the Baltic and Eastern Europe—and resume our housing programme; and we can buy the marginal quantity of grain needed to end bread rationing. What a stimulus the Labour Government would give to hope and faith in its performance if it abolished bread rationing in the midst of the dark winter, and resumed new building by the spring!

But if some fear an undue dependence by Britain on America, others are equally afraid of any dependence on Russia. The crescendo of their apprehension about Soviet trade during the last two years has been, "They can't deliver; they won't deliver; they will deliver." If we trade with Russia, the Americans won't like it; Russia might become more popular.

That American business men will not approve of an Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement, I do not doubt. But I equally have no doubt that the effect of such an agreement would be to enhance their respect for Britain. Americans share the unfortunate human inclination to despise suppliants, and to treat lightly their dependants. They reserve their regard for the wealthy, the strong-armed and the hard-headed. If Britain buys Russian wheat, it will cause a prompt weakening of Chicago prices. If she buys Russian timber, together with the hardwoods of Russia's satellites, the prices of West Coast lumber will begin to fall. By buying from Russia, Britain will end the upward trend of prices which has followed the American monopoly. Few actions could impress America more.

To trade with the Soviet Union, the Government must act with the enthusiasm and the urgency with which it sought American dollars. The machinery we must sell in order to obtain timber and wheat should be high in our order of export priority. Taking a longer view, the stabilising effect of Anglo-Soviet trade may well lead us to the time when, developed in peace, the Russian market may replace for our exporters those markets which are being closed to us by domestic industrialisation and American competition.

Will the Russians work with us in preparing a long-term trade plan? I don't think they know, any more than we do. All that we can say definitely is that, as far as immediate requirements are concerned, "Barkis is willin'."

MAURICE EDELMAN

NATIONAL CRIME

The Commons consider the Criminal Bill,
A measure advanced and enlightened,
The penal proposals meet general goodwill
And the convict's milieu will be brightened.
Amelioration will shortly be seen
In Britain's condemned penitentiaries,
And public opinion was never so keen,
Nor the cooler so crowded, for centuries.

Old lags and young offenders read the Government's report,
And income-tax evaders jugged for gross contempt of Court,
And careless kleptomaniacs about to make a stay
In pleasant, pleasant Pentonville or happy Holloway.

The lists of delinquents committed to gaol
Increase with each new Regulation,
But more every day are remanded on bail
And more on extended probation.
Though killers and gangsters (who cannot be missed,
By modern techniques of detection)
May be joined in the pen by black sheep who resist
Decrees of industrial direction.

Amendments in the Penal Code touch every citizen
As multiple offences daily swim into his ken,
Though legislation bowls along the spread of crime to check,
There is serious congestion in the Bow Street bottleneck.

For the welfare of felons the Bill is designed
But we all scan each measure that passes,
Malfeasance we learn is no longer confined
To the old-fashioned criminal classes.
The public exhibits a deep moral flaw,
And the crime curve so steeply has risen
Half Britain will soon be enforcing the Law
And the other half going to prison.

The benefits of Broadmoor and the charms of Wormwood Scrubbs
Are the gossip of the City and the topic of the Clubs,
So many are embarking on a course of varied crime
That practically all of us will soon be doing time.

SAGITTARIUS

A LONDON DIARY

THE Soviet Union is at least as much an Asiatic as a European Power, and there seems no reason to doubt a report that something like a Far Eastern Cominform met last week-end at Harbin. Delegates are said to have included Chinese, Manchurian, Korean and Malayan Communists. We do not know what they discussed, but we can hazard a guess that one of the subjects was the complex issue of the Japanese Peace Treaty. While Russia is clearly in no hurry for a German Treaty, she has reasons for wanting a Far Eastern settlement which would presumably mean that General MacArthur would be no longer able to draw an iron curtain round Japan. And in this matter the U.S.S.R. might find herself unexpectedly in alliance with the Kuomintang. For in the party of Chiang Kai-shek there are many mansions, and in some of them resentment against America is growing. Some are angry because America has helped them too little; others fear for China's independence. As a loyal member of the Kuomintang said the other day: "The Russians are less dangerous to us than the Americans because the Russians are Asiatics and we should at least be able to survive as Chinese under Chinese Communism." Nor is the orthodox centre of the Kuomintang by any means necessarily friendly to the United States, which it accuses of building up Japan, of seizing, for strategic reasons, Japanese islands that should be ceded to China or Korea, and of attempting to refuse to China the 40 per cent. of Japanese reparations that Nanking regards as its due. The cautious Foreign Minister, Wang Shih-chieh, committed himself recently to the view that there were "insuperable difficulties between China and the United States on the question of Japanese reparations." The Kuomintang agrees with the Chinese Communists in demanding that Russia take part at a Peace Conference, and the same attitude would certainly be taken by the third main Chinese group—the now officially banned Democratic League. The most outspoken Chinese to-day is certainly Marshal Li Chi-shen, who is not a Communist, but was for twenty years a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang. He has for a long time inveighed against Chiang Kai-shek's war with the Communists, and now, in the security of Hongkong, he leads a sort of popular front of progressive Chinese. His last pronouncement is a declaration that no amount of American aid to Chiang can turn the tide of war in favour of the Kuomintang, and that to continue this war "will merely prolong the sufferings of the Chinese people and estrange friendly relations between China and America." He discusses the proposal of Mr. Bullitt to finance the Kuomintang war as "an effort to reduce China to the status of an American colony and anti-Soviet base." He adds that "the price Mr. Bullitt offered for enslaving the Chinese nation is £1,350,000,000, which will in turn be used by Chiang Kai-shek to slaughter his own people."

* * *

I gather that the net effect of the changes at the B.B.C. will be to make the development of new ideas slightly more difficult than before. Instead of the heads of the various services being able to go straight to the Director-General, as they have in practice been doing, another link has been interposed between them and Sir William Haley. The new "cabinet" of five contains administration, technical and Foreign Office skill, but it is not likely to encourage the livelier minds directly responsible for creative experiment in presenting programmes on the air. I am told that the reason for Maurice Gorham's resignation from television was that, under the new set-up, he would not have direct access to the Director-General. By all accounts he was one of the ablest and most energetic servants of the Corporation, and it is a pity they have lost him. Norman Collins's move to television also involves a loss. As director of the Light Programme he has built up the largest radio audience in the country and managed nevertheless to include in it much that the experts regarded as far too sensible for mass listening. I am afraid that the new arrangements mark something of a victory for the "tidy" mind over the more imaginative and freely working elements. But the fifth of the "cabinet," who is to be Director of the Spoken Word, has yet to be appointed. "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God." We now wait with some apprehension to learn who is to play the role of the Almighty.

* * *

Edith Summerskill was obviously ill at ease last week when she had to defend the Order limiting public dinners to one hundred persons. The arguments against the Order are overwhelming. She did not pretend that any food is saved by permitting four groups of ninety-nine to eat together and forbidding four hundred to join in a single feast. And it was pointed out in the debate that the buffet meals now provided at the functions which were once called banquets probably use more and not less rationed foods. Dr. Summerskill took refuge in the argument that the importance of the Order was "psychological." It was designed to placate the housewives who are infuriated by "guzzling" in restaurants. But do you placate people by trying unsuccessfully to deceive them? Guzzling occurs not when a hundred and one people gather for the annual regimental dinner (now forbidden) or the aged miners' tea (now allowed), but when half a dozen take a private room at a restaurant and in return receive a special meal with all sorts of delicacies which are not to be found on the menu. It seems to me a pity for the Ministry of Food to issue Orders which are plainly designed not to stop the abuse, but to persuade people that it is being dealt with, when, in fact, it is not. At the end of the debate Dr. Summerskill reduced the affair to complete absurdity by granting the concession that 101 people can eat together to celebrate any important private or public event. This means that Civil Servants will now waste hundreds of man-hours adjudicating on claims to importance. A Silver Wedding? No. A Golden Wedding? Yes. Why not withdraw the Order and have done with it?

* * *

There must have been at least two thousand people at the Central Hall, Westminster, to hear the report of the eight M.P.s on their journey to Eastern Europe and Russia. Each of them spoke for a quarter of an hour, and, though the speeches varied in quality and viewpoint, all of them were genuinely interesting. Arthur Allen represented the Right-wing trade union viewpoint, and Bing and Zilliacus the intellectual Left. Fred Lee, who talked about trade unions in Poland, and Joe Champion, who concentrated to my surprise on religious freedom in Eastern Europe, seemed to me to prove themselves the most effective orators. Zilliacus wound up with an impassioned policy statement, full of quotable wisecracks. The gist of it is contained in a challenge to Mr. Crossman and the "Keep Left" group, printed this week in our correspondence columns. The audience was obviously well pleased, though one questioner expressed his disappointment that so little had been said about the U.S.S.R. and the talks with Molotov and Stalin. Judging from the people round me, a large majority supported the Zilliacus line. I was too far away to see the expression on the face of Lord Vansittart when Zilliacus said that "America is fomenting civil war in France."

* * *

I was delighted to read that the regular pre-war exchange of animals from the London and Moscow Zoos has now been started again. Apparently there is no rigidity in the transaction and no insistence on an exact *quid pro quo*. The animals so far given by Moscow to London include a lynx and a pair of geese of singular beauty and rarity. Moscow is not deterred by the absence of immediate reciprocity and is content to rely on the good faith of the London Zoo. I hope we will return the compliment with suitable promptitude and that the courtesies will extend to wider fields. Can Mr. Molotov, for instance, be persuaded to reconsider the plight of the twelve Soviet wives whose separation from their British husbands no doubt seems a triviality in Moscow but in England assumes the dimensions of an important issue of principle? If animals can come, why not human beings?

* * *

Sifting the entries that arrive for our *This England* column is like dipping into a bran tub from which all the gifts must be extracted and a few kept. There they are, hundreds of weekly aspirants for distinction. Some of them are sent by people who so little understand the intention of this column that they deem appropriate jokes that are clearly intended by the speaker or writer, extracts whose only point is the sender's disagreement with the sentiment expressed, or even curious remarks or incidents coming not from This England but from this United States or these South Seas. (Scotland presents a more difficult problem: I wish Shakespeare had written *This Britain*, but I expect it would not have scanned or something.) Amongst the innumerable irrelevancies some nuggets of pure gold are discovered: a sanctimonious remark or a Freudian slip that betrays the speaker's real mind; a bizarre incident to illustrate how, in these days, the English may live; the comic exaggeration of an Anglo-Saxon attitude, or words that display in their full beauty some peculiar characteristic of British society (and Society). Recently, though the number of entries submitted has been fully maintained, the lucky-dip has revealed a rather lower proportion of treasures worthy of perpetuation in print. Perhaps the reason is that life in this England is now so full of the odd and ironic that satire has lost some of its point. However that may be, it does seem to be true that contributors show less than their former zeal in searching the columns of the provincial and local papers. May I, with diffidence, also remind them that the so-called high-brow periodicals are almost virgin territory?

By way of encouraging the hundreds of devoted and unpaid contributors to this now famous column, it has been decided from next week to raise the prize for the best entry of the week to £1, and to give 5*s*. for each entry printed. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to D. Murray Gray.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Because the number of tramps on Buckinghamshire roads has increased and many casual wards have been closed, they are to be admitted to institutions where they will be able to see television. —*Star.*

It is the very merit of the death penalty that its bark is worse than its bite—Letter by Lord Quickswood in *Daily Telegraph.*

Asked at Bedlington (Northumberland) juvenile court to-day to value his bantam hen stolen by boys, a 60-year-old witness replied: "As a bird I value it at 5s., but as a friend I value it at 7s. 6d." —*Manchester Evening Chronicle.*

A Leith man who pleaded guilty to throwing his artificial hand through a window of his mother-in-law's house in Kirkgate, Leith, was admonished by Bailie Alexander Sutherland at Edinburgh Burgh Court to-day.—*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.*

It was stated that the three men were playing pitch and toss in the street when the street lamps were switched off at 11.40 p.m.

To enable them to carry on the game they went to a telephone box, took the directory, and set fire to the pages.—*Sunday Dispatch.*

WHO GOES HOME?

[This is the last of a series of articles in which Mr. Brailsford summarises his conclusions after spending several months in Germany.]

When the ancient walls of St. James's Palace have echoed the last of Mr. Molotov's denunciations of his imperialistic colleagues, how much will be left of the present organisation of Germany? How much do we wish to retain? Not the four Zones, nor the Military Government. Not the Quadrupartite Control with its deadlocks and vetoes. Not, I hope, for long, the system of privileges, which segregates rulers and ruled in exclusive clubs, hotels and trains. Will one central German Government replace the confused patchwork of to-day, or will the Iron Curtain become a recognised frontier? The most fateful of these questions may possibly be posed by the Russians. Are the Allied Forces to prolong the Occupation indefinitely, or can we agree to a prompt and general withdrawal?

In retrospect it is clear that the Allies were attempting an impossible task. A military Occupation can keep order, disarm the vanquished, punish war criminals and exact reparations. But can it combine with these necessary operations the re-education of a people? Something can be done and has been done in schools and universities to eliminate the worst relics of the Nazi heritage. The British officials engaged in this delicate task went about it with tact and unlimited devotion. Among the French there are enlightened specialists who have gone far in their constructive educational reforms. But the weaning of the Germans from militarism is a task no teacher could achieve, while everything in the conduct of the victors, whether at Lake Success or in Berlin, reminds them daily that the world is still dominated by military and economic power.

In our political management we ran into dilemmas which it would have been difficult to avoid. When the Western Powers faced the fundamental task of transforming the class structure of German society which fatally drove it into militarism, they hesitated because they are a divided team. Too scrupulous to impose its own views upon the Germans, the Labour Government has not socialised the coal mines and heavy industries; yet it has not allowed them to decide this matter for themselves. The Russians do not shrink from carrying out a social revolution by foreign bayonets. Too ruthlessly, it may be, and at a heavy cost in efficiency, they have made an end of feudalism, shackled or abolished capitalistic enterprise in the factories and eliminated middle-class privilege from the schools. Civil liberty, on the other hand, is sadly to seek in their Zone. The Americans were prompter than we were in conceding a wide measure of autonomy to the Länder. The French are the most authoritarian of the Western Powers and do not conceal their distrust of every German leader, whatever his record. Once in talking to the Premier of a Land in their Zone, we wondered why he placed chairs for us in a far corner of his room. Afterwards we learned that the French had installed on his desk a microphone, disguised as a second telephone. The decencies in our Zone are better observed. But the system of divided responsibilities works ill, for when anything goes wrong we blame the Germans and they blame us. The delays and confusions of a bureaucratic procedure, operating in two languages at three or four levels, have become intolerable. A friend of ours, whose political record is brilliantly clear, has been waiting for over a year for an answer, yes or no, to his request for a licence to start a weekly paper. The same thing may happen in any walk of business. The result is an angry sense of frustration and a growing apathy, since the Germans cannot exercise their will to work for recovery. Our own practice contrasts happily with that of the French and Russians, who are living on the country and exploiting it without scruple. But there are, none the less, two tendencies in our administration. One of them originates in the Board of Trade, which cannot forget that German industry will one day be our competitor in the world market. The other tries to live up to the ideal that we are disinterested trustees. To compromise between these two attitudes is impossible. The time has come when (with the necessary safeguards) we must give the Germans the charge of their own affairs. How far at this stage dare we go? The German question cannot be isolated from the world-wide struggle between East and West. On either side of the Brandenburger Tor our armies face each other as they also do in Greece, Trieste, and Korea. Of these neuralgic areas Berlin may become the centre, in which pain will provoke a fatal gesture of impatience. There is only one radical cure and Walter Lippmann has proposed it—the prompt withdrawal of all our armies from these regions but firstly and chiefly from Germany. He has failed to convince the State Department, but there are grounds for expecting that the Russians may startle us by adopting his proposal. They may reckon, if they do so, on an instinctive response from wide masses of the German people. If the proposal is accepted, it will mean at one blow the recovery of Germany's unity and independence. If it is rejected, the Russians will be able to pose as the champions of these two causes, and a wave of nationalism may be set in motion which will swing over a part of the German population to their side. How deeply rooted is the passion for unity we learned at the Writers Congress which sat in Berlin in October—the first gathering of intellectuals from all the German lands in many years. The restoration of unity was its inspiration and its refrain. If the Russians can so manoeuvre that the average German blames the West for the division of his Fatherland, our half of it will be harder to govern than it is to-day.

If Russia should make this proposal, the response of two of our Allies can be predicted. The French are resolved on the permanent occupation of their Zone. The Americans will grasp the strategical meaning of the Russian move: withdrawal from Germany would leave them without base or foothold in Europe, while the Russians would retire only to Königsberg, with the Poles on the Oder, barely forty miles from Berlin. On this reasoning, the Western Powers must stay in Germany for ever, or until the tension ends in a victorious war. This argument reveals with dazzling clarity the danger in which we stand. It means that our garrison is not primarily designed to keep order in the British Zone: it is an advanced guard destined to delay the westward march of Russia's millions. For that purpose it is ludicrously weak. But one end it will achieve. While it remains in Germany shoulder to shoulder with the American forces, we shall be automatically involved in any war that may break out, anywhere in the world, between the United States and the Soviet Union. If the shooting were to start in Korea, we should be instantly engaged at Hamburg, for it is absurd to suppose that the Russians could march on Munich and Frankfort, without clearing their northern flank. In these conditions, a decision to stay in Germany finally disposes of any hope that we could preserve our neutrality in a war.

This is too narrow an argument for so great an issue. My belief is that if a firm stand on our part could persuade our Allies to agree to an early and general withdrawal of our forces, this would be a decisive step towards peace. It would be for Russia and her satellites a clear proof—perhaps the only possible proof—that we are not meditating war. It might so far ease the tension that after no long delay we might go on to discuss disarmament and the control of atomic energy with some hope of success. To reject this chance, if it is offered to us, would be, to my thinking, too grave a responsibility for a peace-loving nation to shoulder. The details, needless to say, would call for careful and sceptical consideration. Our garrisons could not be withdrawn until a lightly armed police force had been built up under trustworthy officers, which could protect a democratic German administration against violence from Right or Left. To devise a system of control against re-armament would be no less essential.

But it may be that the Russians will not lay any proposal as radical as this before the Conference. In that case we should aim, for our own sake, at a reduction of the four garrisons to the lowest level compatible with the preservation of order. For that purpose we do not need a force in our Zone of about 100,000 men, for the Germans have retained their habits of passive obedience. This army involves an inexcusable waste of labour, both British and German. We keep 19,000 men, for example, to overawe friendly Hamburg and a further body of 40,000 Germans to serve them. These armies, if they are equipped for mobility, could be cut down, without risk, to a fourth of their present numbers. The next step is to sweep away the whole system of military government. Such control as we may still have to retain should be exercised only at the top in dealings with the responsible German Ministers. If we are represented on the local level at all, it should be by inspectors, empowered to report but not to interfere directly. It is vital that the new German administration shall be respected by its own citizens; to this end we must reduce our control to the basic issues of security and solvency, and make it, as far as may be, invisible and inaudible. We started with 26,000 civilian officials under the Control Commission; there are now about 16,000. The Americans in their parallel service manage with 4,000. Even this number is far too large, if Germans are in future to govern themselves. But it is in the lower ranks that the reduction should be made.

The outstanding issue over which German unity will be wrecked or achieved turns on the choice between a strong central government and a weak federal union. The French are for a weak centre because they want a weak Germany. The Americans are for federalism, because they have no use for economic planning. Their constitutional experts are still thinking of government in eighteenth-century terms as a necessary evil, and they are still attached to *laissez faire*. General Clay comes of an old Southern political family; it is natural that he should stand for the sovereignty of the Länder, as his fathers did for that of States. The result to-day is a chaos, in which the feeble Bi-zonal Economic Council is powerless even to require Bavaria to share with her neighbours her surplus of potatoes. The Länder as cultural and regional units have an important part to play, but Germany will never recover, until she has a central government capable of planning her economic life, with powers at its command which can exact obedience from a self-willed Land. On this matter it seems to me the Russians, in spite of their malevolence and bad manners, are more nearly in the right than our Western Allies. We may wish to discuss these constitutional matters with the Germans; we may properly retain a right of veto; but surely it is for them to draw up their own Constitution. The chief difficulty is to ensure that the National Assembly shall be freely elected. The suppressed Social Democrats must be entitled to put forward their candidates in the Russian Zone.

On the other chief issue in dispute, "the control of the Ruhr," it seems to me that we are the victims of words. What has to be controlled is not "The Ruhr" as a territorial unit, but the armaments potential of its heavy industry. If this is properly a concern of a Transatlantic Power, by what right do we exclude the Russians? But this control should be confined to questions of security, and it must be operated without vetoes.

On such terms as these, if the Russians are sincere, the unity of Germany can be preserved and a settlement reached. If, however, the Americans have become too tough to consider a reasonable compromise, it is for us to ask ourselves, before it is too late, whether we wish to be automatically enrolled as a dependent ally in their ranks. If at this critical conference Germany is cut in two, could Providence itself guarantee the peace of Europe?

H. N. Brailsford

LAYMEN and LAWYERS

If you consider separately the three arms of the law—legislative, executive, judicial—in relation to their known attitude to some of the questions raised by the current Criminal Justice Bill, you find that reaction is represented to-day by the permanent Government officials, Scotland Yard, His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary—and laymen on the Opposition benches; and that, while the real impetus for reform comes from Socialist back-benchers, there is almost unprecedented agreement among lawyers of all parties in support of the reforms proposed.

The influence of office and the rigidity of permanent officials may be reflected in the present attitudes of Mr. Chuter Ede and Lord Templewood to the proposal that the death penalty be suspended. In 1938 Mr. Ede voted for suspension, while Lord Templewood (then Home Secretary) "did not feel he could take the risk of removing the death penalty even for an experimental period." To-day it is Lord Templewood who, out of office, advocates abolition, and Mr. Ede who, as Home Secretary, opposes it because "the time is not opportune." The Home Office statistics, so far as they are relevant, prove little. By way of "bringing before the House certain details of criminal statistics which indicate the relative position of crimes involving violence in 1938 and 1946," Mr. Ede pointed out that there were 97 murders in 1938 and 138 in 1946. Both these figures are below the recent average—for fifty years there have been 150 murders a year. Mr. Ede went on to say that felonious and malicious wounding increased in that time from 1,990 to 3,009, and robbery with violence from 287 to 921—these are non-capital but floggable crimes. The Government's decision not to deal with the death penalty in their draft of the Bill must therefore be based on non-statistical inference and on the kind of prophecy that has always challenged this proposal—and, in the case of other offences than murder, has always been wrong. As Mr. Silverman said in the debate, the logical inferences drawn by Lord Templewood are more easily comprehensible than those drawn by the Home Secretary. "The only thing that has happened between 1938 and 1947," said Mr. Silverman, "has been an increase of violent crime. What deduction does my right honourable friend (the Home Secretary) draw? He wishes to abolish *corporal* punishment, but not capital punishment. . . I cannot understand why, if corporal punishment is necessary to restrain violent crime, it should be abolished when violent crime increases, whereas, in the case of capital punishment, the exactly opposite course is adopted."

As a legislative body, the House of Commons has never functioned as a composite lawyer. Valuable contributions, completely wrong-headed to a lawyer, come from non-legal members, and often carry the day against "expert" opinion, which tends to regard the Law (with a capital "L") as a God-given set of principles having an unchallengeable existence of their own. Thus, it would not be surprising to see the defeat or at least the drastic curtailment of Clause 33 of this Bill, which seeks to empower magistrates to order a defendant's finger-prints to be taken before releasing him on bail. If this were needed only in order that an old offender's criminal record could be produced from the archives of the Criminal Record Office, thus enabling the police to say, *after* he had been found guilty, that he had previous convictions, M.P.s might not object to it so much. After all, it would give a first offender nothing to fear, and if he was acquitted his finger-prints would be destroyed—unless he wanted them as a memento for himself or a chapter-heading for his biographers; and it would give an old offender his temporary freedom instead of a remand in custody. But the Solicitor-General has now explained to the House that, in the case of an old offender who has left his finger-prints at the scene of a new crime, the police are unable to prove that they *are* his finger-prints until they have taken his impressions again—they cannot produce his old finger-print form at his trial because that would inform the jury (or the magistrate) that he had been previously convicted. This information did nothing to commend the clause to the House, and opposition to it seems likely to grow. The opposition is irrational and no doubt annoying to the initiated, because no one seems to mind a man's being photographed, measured, stripped and searched in prison as an unconvicted person, and finger-printing is a quite gentle exercise. But if laymen don't like it, they won't have it.

It is equally irrational to object to the proposal that a "finding of guilt" dealt with by justices under the Probation of Offenders Act, 1907, shall in future be recorded as a conviction—though some of the lawyer-M.P.s were among the objectors to this. Even the Solicitor-General, defending the clause, made only the one point that the present system facilitated something like misrepresentation by prospective employees asked whether they had ever been "convicted" of an offence. The legal anomalies that flow from the present statutory pretence that a summary "binding-over" is not a conviction are many. To name only two, there is the case of the parent or guardian "bound over" for an offence that may affect the mental or physical welfare of a child, the removal of which from his custody or guardianship is beset with legal difficulties because he has not been "convicted"; and that of a person bound over two or three times, at different courts, for offences that should (on "conviction") result in the endorsement of his driving licence. It is too widely assumed that the Probation of Offenders Act, 1907, is designed to deal only with first offenders—perhaps because its predecessor was, in fact, called the Probation of First Offenders Act, 1887. I have seen a judge "bind over" a lifelong burglar found guilty as a "habitual criminal" under the Prevention of Crime Act, 1908.

There is another conflict between the layman and the expert on the "age of criminal responsibility," which at present is eight years. Some M.P.s think it should be raised to fourteen, so as to "keep all children out of the criminal courts." To the lawyer it is an "irrebuttable presumption" that no child under eight—it was raised from seven in 1933—can be guilty of any criminal offence: there is legal magic in the expression *doli incapax*. From eight to fourteen the presumption is rebuttable, by evidence that the child knew that what he was doing was wrong. In this difficult matter the expert is on firm ground. Modern children seem to know about *doli incapax*, if one can judge from the one who recently told a policeman, "You can't touch me, mate, I'm under eight." And it would not keep children out of the courts to hold them guiltless up to fourteen—they can, at the tenderest age, be brought before a Juvenile Court as being "in need of care and protection," a compendious phrase for getting into trouble in childhood.

But perhaps it is this "care and protection" procedure that invoked the greatest measure of agreement between lawyers and laymen in the debate. There were many expressions of concern about adolescents who are sent to "approved schools" for the sole purpose of removing them from evil surroundings, from drunken or cruel or neglectful or incestuous parents, and who run away from the school. When they have done this two or three times they are sent to a Borstal Institution for two years—by magistrates in petty sessions. Often their resentment is ferocious. They run away again. If this goes on there is no alternative, under the present system, to sending them to prison; and this has actually happened to young people whose only offence was to have inadequate parents and to have run away from Borstal. What are we to do with them if they will not submit to our "care and protection"? Leave them alone, say the critics, if you can't think of anything better than prison for them. This conflict between benevolent autocracy and *laissez-faire* humanitarianism is unresolved.

C. H. ROLPH

WHAT THEY PROMISED

[This story from "Novy Mir," No. 9, 1947, is one of a series of sketches by Zoshchenko which, he states in a foreword, he wrote from notes made from partisans' accounts of their experiences. It is to be noted that Zoshchenko is not debarred from writing in the Soviet Union, but that the subject matter of his sketches has changed.]

THE Germans arrived in the village of Cherenkovo in August 1941.

They at once ordered the people not to go out into the street until further notice. And for two days the people stayed in their homes without knowing what was happening outside.

On the third day the Germans told them to gather in the square where they used to hold their meetings. The people gathered in the square and stood a long time waiting. One of the Germans, they thought, will come in a few minutes and tell us something.

But no one came. Only, two Germans patrolled the street. But they walked silently, smoking and casting sidelong glances at the crowd.

At last one of them said to the people in broken Russian:

"Why do you stand with your backs to the picture? Or are there eyes in the back of your silly heads?"

Now on the square there was a Board of Honour. Here were usually put up the names of those who had distinguished themselves in their farm work. The board was somewhat to the side, behind a wooden platform and that was why the people had not noticed it. Now they saw that the Germans had put up a poster on the board. An enormous poster, printed in different colours.

Above the poster was a notice in Russian: "What Germany promises to the Russian peasant." In the top right-hand corner of the poster was a small brick house with a green roof. Around the house was a fence with flowers and by the flowers stood an elegant lady with a watering-can. Smiling sweetly, she watered a circular flower-bed, in the middle of which there stood a gilt glass sphere on a pole.

And this top drawing had a separate, very smart-looking frame round it.

Below this frame was drawn the interior of the little house. A nicely tidied-up room, flowers, pictures in gold frames, lace curtains at the window, a piano with an open keyboard. In the middle of the room a table and on the table a samovar. Food in abundance—honey, preserves, ham, jam.

And round the table sat the peasant family. All looked important, puffed up and posed proudly. The men were clean shaven and wore stiff collars. Even the little old grandfather had a starched shirt. But he had a little pointed beard and was not drinking tea. He had finished and was looking with delight at his pocket watch which he held in his hand. Obviously the artist wanted to show that even the grandfather had his pocket watch, and just look how pleased he was with it!

As for the women, the German artist had painted them with special care. Their hair was fashionably dressed. All wore brooches, earrings, rings, bangles and bracelets. And they were drinking tea out of cups, their little finger genteelly outstretched. The children too had been drawn in with care. The little boys had partings in their hair and the girls wore fine, brightly coloured ribbons. Such was the wholly German idyll which the artist had drawn, to show that this picture was also the ideal of our peasant life.

It was difficult to look at this poster without smiling, so false and somehow beside the mark was the artist's representation of quiet peasant happiness, in which a stiff collar and gold bracelets were the summit of ambition.

The people smiled as they looked at the picture. But what particularly tickled them was a little dog which the artist had hastily drawn in on the carpet beside the table. It was some sort of small white lap-dog, with a tuft on its tail and a

blue ribbon round its neck. It lay lazily outstretched on the multi-coloured carpet—well fed and satisfied, averting its head from a bowl of milk.

And there the people stood smiling, looking at this delicate little dog, and one of them pretended to heave a deep sign and said:

"All my life I have dreamt of having a little lap-dog or pug-dog in my home. And now the German Reich has made my dearest wish come true. It's giving me this fine gift."

The people burst out laughing. Whereupon another elderly peasant said:

"Now don't you rely on their presents. There's the saying: 'The boss gave me some pants and tore off my hands; he gave me some boots and cut off my feet.'"

Again there was a burst of laughter. And the two patrolling Germans looked angrily at those who were laughing. Soon the people were ordered to disperse to their homes.

The next day an inhabitant of this village, the farmer Volodya Roshchin, left for the woods and joined a partisan detachment. For nearly six months he did not know what was going on in his village. But in the spring of 1942, the leader of the detachment, while giving orders to his scouts, said to Roshchin:

"Let's see, Volodya, you lived in the village of Cherenkovo, didn't you? Go and find out if there is a German garrison there, and if so, how many men."

In great excitement Volodya went off to reconnoitre. He walked along the familiar paths, thinking of how he would see his native village. Crossing the field and copse, he went down to the river. There he suddenly saw that the village no longer existed.

Almost running, he reached the vegetable patches where the village started. But it was not there. It had been burnt, or blown up, or destroyed in some other way. Even the chimney stacks were lying flat on the ground. And all the fences had been knocked down. Only the burnt trees and shrubs were standing dry and erect like broomsticks.

With some difficulty Volodya found the place where his house had recently stood. Now only the stone foundation was left. There were also some charred pieces of wood. That was all.

Now knowing why, he walked along the village street. A flock of crows rose cawing from a birch tree where a corpse was hanging.

Amid the rubble and the destruction, Volodya suddenly saw the familiar Board of Honour. It stood undamaged next to the wooden platform which had collapsed. But the German poster was no longer there. Or rather strips of the poster still hung there, washed by rain and snow:

". . . hat . . . ermany pro . . . ises t . . . he R . . . sian . . . sant."

MIKHAIL ZOSHCHENKO

The Arts and Entertainment

THE THEATRE

"Private Enterprise," at the St. James's
"The Moon in the Yellow River," at the Arts
"The Patched Clock," at Boltons

Reading the title from her programme before it began the tiara next to me remarked: "I hope this isn't propaganda." It didn't look like it at first. A large assorted family, dry good-tempered old father, solid Philip the eldest son, married to the flighty but stylish Melanie, a sensible daughter widow of a pilot, Andrew a pacifist, Stocky the bad hat, back from the wars with a V.C. and engaged to the local rich nitwit. Clash of opinion within the family and without; for at the family factory a strike is threatened. One worker refuses to join the Union and father and Philip refuse to sack him. A matter of principle.

Yes, we all recalled the Court Theatre in the 1900's; and an agreeable reminder too, of theatrical virtues which have dropped out of our violence-over-nothing melodrama and illiterate comedies. They were not afraid of writing then and here, too, at first, are pointed lines, sometimes witty, generally amusing. Action is not merely a fist to a chin and this family can manage simply to sit, dumpily arranged by Mr. Basil Dean, it is true; but the talk is lively enough for us to be content to listen. There are the different temperaments and several good hares. Which were we to be invited to pursue?

Alas, none. It might have been a play of character; the V.C. is self-confessedly still a bounder and cynically becomes a Labour M.P. It might have been a play of a living issue—the closed shop. True one of the strike committee is a 1910 stage agitator, but the other is genuine, a co-op. stalwart, an English type. But no, in the third act the author shows his hand, the dead hand of the propagandist, rooting for the absolute rights of ownership. It is not this thesis that I quarrel with. Any idea good or bad, wise or foolish, is material for the playright. But simply to assert it is rhetoric not drama, and, in this case, bad rhetoric. There can be no clash when only one side is stated: and character is not revealed by a simple line-up. The hares (the pacifist, the worthless V.C., the flighty wife) are left pointless and bewildered, all over the stage. The humour descends to mannerless puerilities directed (shades of Galsworthy!) at the Prime Minister's Christian name. And Mr. Nicholas Hannen, who had started the evening with a certain pithy cynicism, ends it, centre stage, reciting (yes!) Rule Britannia, the family grouped behind him. Mr. St. John Ervine ought to be an old enough hand to know that propaganda makes bad art. Well, well, they used to tell *us* that in the thirties: now it's our turn to tell *them*.

At the Arts there is another sad failure. But this time the failure is not the author's. *The Moon in the Yellow River* is a first-rate play, set in Ireland in the aftermath of the rebellion where each character carries his plausible logic to its extravagant extreme. But this revival, in spite of the welcome return of that good actor, Jack Hawkins, gives us only the palest ghost of the original. Mis-cast, mis-directed, mis-handled, muffed. And I do not refer to the fatal bad luck by which the revolver failed to fire at the end of the second act. That can easily be put right. But if you give, for instance, the part of Darrell Blake—a post *manqué*—to one pretty profile from the films, and the part of his ex-colleague turned policeman, to a second, you are asking for disaster. The film studios are, it appears, putting out a number of their young men into current theatre productions to give them experience. The over-dressed, over-coiffeured pacifist in *Private Enterprise* was a Korda protegé. These potential starlets plainly need the practice but they have been selected in the first place for qualities irrelevant to the theatre and the bait, if it is a question of a bait, is not wisely taken. In this case it was the last straw.

I must confess to a marked antipathy to the modern costume play. The Kensington sense of the past, written in Kensington prose pronounced by Kensington tongues is not my idea of an evening in the theatre. As they go, Miss Joan Temple's *The Patched Cloak* seems quite a deft chronicle of the reign of Henry VII, impersonated here by Mr. John Wyse. It is the sort of thing that, with Larry Guilgrave in the lead and mounted by Motley, might have packed them in before the war, if Gordon Daviot had not got in ahead with *Richard of Bordeaux*. It is not very vulgar, nor very inaccurate, nor very Tudor—just tame, tame, tame.

T. C. WORSLEY

PASMORE AT THE REDFERN

EVERY painter worth consideration displays a new combination of observable, objective facts and imagined, subjective ones. Where an artist's central meaning or emphasis is predominantly inner or predominantly outer, the tension—which is the art—is relaxed and we have either the unruly growth of an undisciplined, luxuriant imagery (the too-easy triumph of inner fantasy); or the dry, uninterestingly accomplished rendering of the obvious (the subjection of imagination to observation, or to the mere mechanics of technique).

Victor Pasmore has sometimes been in danger of the latter, as Sutherland has of the former. If neither has so far succumbed to the ease and pleasures of an extreme position, each has rare talent and intelligence to thank for his preservation. But what *has* been easy for Pasmore is the achievement of an excellently broad but sometimes merely tasteful equivalent for the visual scene. With a very sharp eye for tone, he could always evoke a glass of water or a willow-tree, and place them securely in a spatial context, with the minimum of brushwork and actual paint. Solidity has always come floatingly (yet none the less surely) as in Turner. Unlike Turner, though, solidity in Pasmore's pictures is a matter of rectilinear shadowy wafers of definitive tone-colour, superimposed, but with plenty of air between. His objects are reduced to silhouettes of colour and usually these silhouettes remain rather Japanese and detached from one another: their function is as often decorative as plastic—a fact which their derivation from reality (by means of a too-photographic eye, it must be said) cannot alter. In his new large landscapes he hopes to get the conviction of unity, of an all-over impact, by setting isolated, intricate, photographic yet stylish silhouettes in a realistic paste, matched to the atmospheric appearance of river, mist and sky. But one is aware of these separate processes. One is also aware of the painter's extreme detachment; of a lack of empathy; of the painfully conscious manipulation of a multitude of snapshots—photographically accurate units and fragments of visual information being shuffled and organised into "a composition." Again, one notices that the character of these vertical screens of colour, which always lie parallel to the picture's surface whether they evoke a face or a factory chimney, is determined just as much by the rhythms inherent in Pasmore's hand as by the form of the things thus described. A sort of squarish scribble constitutes Pasmore's very suggestive "brushwriting" (to borrow a word from Mr. Hugh Gordon Porteus). Tentative triangular patches of tone (more tone than colour sometimes) are not so much a sign or symbol for *child* as an ill-developed photograph of a three-year-old in a summer frock. Yet at first sight there seems a Klee-like development in *Children Playing on the Banks of a River*.

That Pasmore should fight the bleared snapshots in himself is good: yet I cannot feel his amateur Seurat dots are a success: or the brittle crazy-paving shapes he is now trying to see in the mist. His genius is less modern than this: he alone can emulate the broad, unangular vision of Degas.

PATRICK HERON

MAM'SELLE ANGOT AND OTHERS

DERAIN'S decor and costumes—three scenes and three drop-curtains—is one of the loveliest things ever seen at Covent Garden. No wonder Massine insisted on his collaboration. The choreography, very typical of Massine, is also most brilliant, with its mingled strands of grace, wit, lyricism, burlesque and popular humour; and his unique mastery of the counterpoint of movement gives solidity to the surface sparkle. It is a very lightweight ballet indeed. Like champagne it froths, but like champagne it has a clear, invigorating substance. It is not its lightness that one criticises, but that the ballet is not quite perfectly distilled from the comic opera; bits of the original plot somewhat encumber it, like bits of cork in the champagne. The dancing of the whole company is as brilliant as the choreographic design, and Lecocq's delicious music, beautifully orchestrated by Gordon Jacob, is a delight throughout. Massine himself originally danced the Barber, whose dance of despair, counterpointed with the heartless Mam'selle Angot's love-dance with the Caricaturist, is one of the high lights of the ballet. This counterpoint is a stroke of genius on the part of choreographer, and the dance is astonishingly well performed by Alexander Grant, who replaces Massine. A young character dancer of great talent, he is also one of the three male dancers in *Symphonic Variations*. One would like to pay tribute to the beautiful dancing of the other principal dancers, but space forbids. It is the scenography that remains in one's mind as the chief glory of this ballet, and surely henceforth one of the treasures of Sadler's Wells. A company which can present in a single

programme *Checkmate, Symphonic Variations* and *Mam'selle Angot,* has no parallel in Europe at present. *Checkmate* seems to have grown in significance during its long retreat; or perhaps one has grown up to it. It is, in all its elements, a work of great intelligence and beauty, the most moving, I think, of Ninette de Valois' ballets.

The young company known as Metropolitan Ballet has an artistic standard which is still some way beyond its present powers of realisation. But it is a great thing to have a standard. Expressively, Celia Franca is easily its best dancer. Sonia Arova and Paul Gnatt are also valuable members, and the fifteen-year-old Lithuanian ballerina Beresova and the young Danish dancer Eric Bruhn show great promise. Their most ambitious ballet, *The Lovers' Gallery,* invented and designed by George Kirsta, the artistic director, with choreography by Frank Staff, is a most ingenious and amusing spectacle, but not yet a good ballet. It was exasperating that Lennox Berkeley's music, which is interesting and beautiful, did not receive a better performance. In fact, the musical accompaniment of these ballets is the worst I have ever heard. They deserve much better.

I can only draw attention in this notice to Ram Gopal's dances at the Prince's Theatre, which so fortunately and significantly coincide with the Exhibition of Indian Art at Burlington House. It is there that he should be invited to perform. It would be an enlightening experience. BERYL DE ZOETE

THE MOVIES

"Shoe-Shine," at the Rialto
"It Always Rains on Sunday," at the Odeon

"Abroad"—how the flavour of that word has altered! It means the forbidden lands, or for an insistent traveller Eire, Gibraltar, Malta, the Bahamas. New books from abroad? Precious few. Paintings? Even fewer. So far as films are concerned we have yet to feel the stoppage. When it comes we shall discover how far, with the worst of Hollywood, we are depriving ourselves of the best from Europe.

Meanwhile Mr. Sam Goldwyn's *The Bishop's Wife,* after its royal showing, has been packed away in cold storage—where it might just as well stay—and there is a new film from Italy showing at the Rialto. Like the other Italian films London has seen, this one dates from the war. Date, however, in the fashionable sense, it does not at all. Again, the slice of life and the sense of tragedy confront us irresistibly. Do you remember the children in *Open City* who, after blowing up a train or a munitions dump, run home to their families to have their ears warmed? Move on a year or so. Rome is in the sway of the Americans; the war still rages in Normandy, in the Pacific; those same children or others have adventured further in lawlessness. They have, many of them, no home; they shine the shoes of sloping American Joes; wads of inflated currency pass from hand to hand; a hungry look stamps all faces; dilapidation rules; and the enemy now is the Black Market—black as ever the blackshirts were. Two such children, who with their earnings have bought a horse, are caught trying to sell black blankets, arrested, imprisoned. It is called a reform school, but it is a boys' prison. Separated at once they occupy different cells (five to a cell), and the heart-breaking gang life sets one against the other. Their fight against corruption ends in a mutual struggle. They endure frightful miseries, and when at last they manage to escape, the elder of the two kills the younger. An accident. A series of such accidents has taken us atrociously far from the film's opening, in which the two boys on horseback race wildly along a shade-dappled track outside Rome.

This film, unsparing in its harshness, would be grim indeed to endure if its conviction were not matched by its magnificent pity. The realism of *Shoe-Shine* is of a kind to make one weep. All the children (a hundred or more of them) are supremely natural, and script and direction have the forceful beauty we have come to expect from these renascent films. Italy suffered more than some countries, but less than others, from the war. Perhaps only so much, or comparatively so little, suffering as theirs can prove fertile to the work of art. Certainly here, in *Shoe-Shine* as in *Open City* and *Live in Peace,* the genius seems to reside in the material, the situation. All the names in the programme of *Shoe-Shine* are new to me. Those of the two boys are Rinaldo Smordoni and Franco Interlenghi. The director is Vittorio De Sica.

It Always Rains on Sunday is a good English thriller with plenty of local colour. Curious that, in films, our most lyrical glimpses of London should nearly all be associated with crime: curious but not, I think, so deplorable. The chase wonderfully sharpens attention, and provides the excuse—like taking out a gun and a dog in the country—for this particular walk through Bethnal Green. A little low street where on Sunday (apparently) it can't help raining; sawn-off steeple in the distance; trains passing roof-high; Petticoat Lane; dance-band leader with a gramophone shop and a lure for girls; the Hyde Park marchers, with banner, setting off; boozer and coffee-stall, dance-hall and youth club; a seedy trio of thieves; escaped convict; Dad's game of darts; the Salvation Army across the way chanting "Temptation, oh Temptation" under a lamp-post; a girl and a boy in mackintoshes, who have squabbled, making it up; murder of a "fence"; final chase along dark, wet streets and in and out among the sidings. A damp, fresh little lyric about a neighbourhood that may have seemed remote to those living at the other end of the bus route. If the crime and passion are spurious, they throw everyday surroundings into more vivid relief than would, probably, that district visitor, the documentary. Good inconspicuous acting from a large cast; director, Robert Hamer, who has used his camera and his wits with appreciation.

May I indicate to our film-makers a region just to the north-west of Bethnal Green that, with another century's look and a life of its own, should prove even more photogenic? Under a wide sky sit the trim roads and squares, a canal-side, gardens, factories, trees, an occasional extravagance in Gothic. The unlikely name of this neighbourhood is De Beauvoir Town. WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

RADIO NOTES

NEW arts demand new words, and in its short day the radio has given us many, not always beautiful. Seeking during the last few weeks to compound a necessary word that should be at once inoffensive in sound, clear in meaning and traditional in formation, I have met with a philological difficulty. The transitive Latin verb *auscultare,* to listen to, hearken to, give ear to, produces in English the two verbs "to auscult" (*rare*) and "to auscultate," the latter being familiar in medicine. Normally I would not wish to have truck with such words; the wireless I would either listen to, or switch off. It was some such word as *inauscultable* or *inauscultatable* that I wanted. After careful consideration of the rival claims of medicine and radio, I venture to suggest that *inauscultatable* be reserved for those organs inaudible even to the stethoscope, and that *inauscultable* be dedicated to such radio-programmes as *Paradise Lost,* which has now been going on for seven weeks, and has been more or less unlistenable-to from the very start.

Week after week we have had that superlatively vacuous musical introduction; to it the tones of the organ have recently been added. Week after week we have had the voice of Mr. Dylan Thomas coming up like thunder on the road to Mandalay; rarely can such gusty intakes of breath have passed across the ether. Week after week a number of distinguished actors have been persuaded to damage their reputations by crazy semi-dramatisations of the characters in the poem. Week after week Mr. Abraham Sofaer

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has striven to maintain over whole quarters of an hour tones of an intensity neither desirable nor supportable. I do not wonder that toward the end of some sessions he has given the impression of having lost the thread of the argument and of emphasising quite arbitrary words to keep up his own interest. But for once I do not feel much blame attaches to the actors, and on occasion—Miss Martita Hunt's Sin, for example, and Mr. Robert Harris's Adam—they have been very moving; it is the whole thing that seems to be wrong. It leads one to wonder exactly how much trial-and-error work, if any, is done at the mike before the Third commits us and itself to these curious large-scale ventures. The broadcasts of *The Prelude* are much better devised; we are given adequately long selections from the poem; and these are interspersed with excellent talks about various problems which it raises. So far we have heard Mr. Herbert Read, Miss Helen Darbishire, Mr. Geoffrey Grigson and Mr. Stephen Potter. It was particularly sensible to include Mr. Grigson, not only for his valuable knowledge of the scenery of the poem, but for his sensitive querying of certain of our traditional easy-going acceptances of much in Wordsworth that he finds dubious. With Milton still the subject of acrimonious debate, there was admirable opportunity for similar treatment. At the risk of being thought the literary equivalent of a Fascist beast, I will suggest that *Paradise Lost* itself suffers greatly from monotony and from a deficiency of interesting and varied action, which one puts up with more readily off the air than on. The promoters have at last realised that substantial cutting will do no harm. So what do they cut? All those exquisite, absurd descriptions of the details of the Creation, the vegetation, the fishes and so on, which fall on the ear with such enchanting relief among so much that is unendingly vague and unvisioned.

Not that Milton's natural history is any dottier than the real thing; for immediately after last week's reduced ration of Milton, we had Professor Haldane talking irresistibly about "Nature and Nurture," which are his terms for heredity and environment. I can always listen with extreme pleasure as he chats on and on about the behaviour of rats, wheat, humans, carnations, flies, etc. He is a model broadcaster, individual but without affectation or mannerism. I was again reminded of Milton in the adaptation of Mr. Somerset Maugham's "Narrow Corner" the other night. Can anyone since Milton have been so suspicious of Woman as Mr. Maugham? Miltonic or not, the low, sordid intrigue came very well over the air, and there was a performance by Mr. Arthur Sinclair of astonishing dimensions. The whole broadcast was eminently auscultable.

HENRY REED

Correspondence

THE GREAT DEBATE

SIR,—Next to the spectacle of the Liberal Party's unremitting efforts to stage the miracle of the resurrection by the methods of Coué, I think the saddest sight in politics is that presented by my friends Leonard Woolf and Dick Crossman in trying to make the ghost of the Western Bloc walk again, long after the body of that doctrine has been taken over by Messrs. Marshall, Bevin and Co. My friends see as clearly as I do that the world is being divided up into two blocs and that that will ultimately lead to a third world war. But their remedy is to try to create a third bloc independent of both the other two! The logic of their position is that the third world war is well nigh inevitable and we must concentrate on staying neutral when it breaks out. I believe on the contrary that we can prevent the next world war, but cannot stay out if we fail.

The psychological basis of their position seems to be a phobia about the Soviet Union and the Communist Parties of Europe (who by this time are most of the effective trade unions and political leadership of most of Europe, either alone or in conjunction with Socialists; as for instance, in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Rumania) almost as strong as that of Truman, Churchill and Bevin but inhibited, as is not the case with them, by a lingering belief in the international aims on which the Labour Party won the General Election.

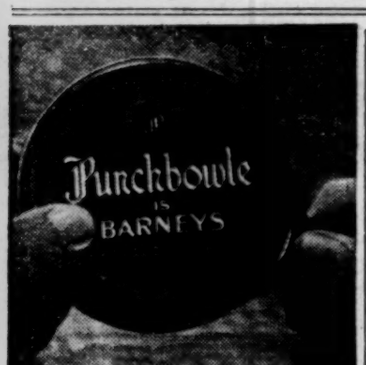
I believe the Left and the Right are both more realistic about the facts of public life than my wishful-thinking friends in the middle. Thus I agree with much of Mr. W. N. Ewer's case demolishing Mr. Leonard Woolf's pamphlet, and I think Mr. Christopher Buckley in your last issue has shown up the utter unreality of Mr. Crossman's pathetic faith in a West European Bloc that would be anything else than what Mr. Marshall and Mr. Bevin are making it at present, namely a bridgehead for the American holy war against the European working class, trying to make Europe safe for Wall Street in the guise of rescuing it from Communism. At one time the Woolf-Crossman-Cole school were eloquent about this West European Bloc being run by Social Democrats. With the French Socialists all too obviously treading the same road as their inglorious pre-war German forebears and clinging to that French combination of von Papen and Dr. Schacht, M. Robert Schuman, where they are not directly allied with de Gaulle's bravos, my friends have at least ceased to importune us with talk about the West European Social Democrats as a "Third Force." But they seem quite prepared to do on an international scale what the French Socialists have already done at home, namely to accept a Marshall Plan West Europe run by General de Gaulle and his political equivalents in Italy as the independent West European Social Democratic bloc of their dreams.

So far as I am concerned this letter is my declaration of war against this whole phoney Left school in foreign policy. I have forborne from attacking them for a long time, hoping that the march of events would reveal their errors to them. But the time has come to say clearly that those who take the present Woolf-Crossman-Cole line offer no true alternative to the Government's policy of subservience to the United States, which means ultimately capitulation to American capitalism and support of near-Fascism in Western Europe as we are already doing in Greece. The only policy that is in accordance with the Labour Party's election pledges and that will put an end to the division of the world into two blocs is the one summed up in the following propositions:

(1) No unification of Europe without the Soviet Union. That means implementing the Labour Party's pledge to make the Anglo-Soviet Alliance the basis for co-operation between our two countries after the war. In practice that means revising and strengthening the Alliance and making it and the Anglo-French and the Franco-Soviet Alliances the basis for an all-European regional agreement within the United Nations. This agreement might well include a West European sub-division going most of the way toward federation. But the latter could be formed only as part and parcel of an all-European agreement with the Soviet Union.

The first step in that agreement might well be the conclusion of a commercial treaty with the U.S.S.R. as well as with Poland, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. We should be prepared to go all the way in the co-ordination of our national planning with the countries of Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R., matching their production targets and export programmes with ours, and we should put as much energy and goodwill into seeking such agreements as we have hitherto put into exclusive co-operation with the United States.

(2) No democracy in Europe without Socialism. We should act on the Labour Party's declared official view that Socialism is essential to the attainment of our international aims and notably to successful economic reconstruction, to removing Fascism and all forms of political tyranny and to promoting the spread of democracy and political freedom. If we act on that view as well as on Mr. Attlee's statement in the House on November 18 of last year, that



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The report was adopted.

whereas on issues of political freedom we stand with the Americans, we agree with the U.S.S.R. on economic planning, in dealing with the German problem, we can insist on a compromise agreement for the future of Germany that would be acceptable to both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. For each would go a long way with us to prevent us siding with the other. In general, we could work out constructive compromises between East and West Europe on these lines on all the major issues, and we could effectively insist upon bridging the economic gap between Marshall Plan Western Europe and the Socialist-planned East, through the European Economic Commission of the United Nations.

We should insist upon withdrawing our troops from Greece and settling the affairs of that country through the United Nations on the basis of the principles of the Teheran and Crimea agreements, which pledge us to help the Greek people to restore democracy and abolish Fascism. In the Middle East and the Far East alike we should use our position as a permanent member of the Security Council to insist upon the future of these areas, which are on the frontiers of the Soviet Union, being settled through Uno with full Soviet participation.

By taking that line the Labour Government would make itself no less disliked than it is already by the American Right, who have no use for us anyway. But, believe me, they would respect us a lot more and be far more anxious to pay attention to what we want. The American Left, on the other hand, who are beginning to raise their heads, would be incalculably encouraged and strengthened by our taking this line. And we should get a real response from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

But, of course, the price for this policy is not only more Socialism at home going, indeed, most of the way to a foreign trade monopoly so that we can guarantee deliveries of goods, and giving the workers further incentives through a greater share and more authority in the processes of production. On all that I see eye to eye with my Centre-Left friends in the Party. But the other condition is that we cease wallowing in political illiteracy, social superstition and ideological fanaticism about that decisively great part of European working-class leadership (not to mention the Soviet Union and China), which happens to be Communist.

The Communists sprang from the Left Wing of the Social Democratic Parties in their several countries, and their ultimate objective is a society which contains democracy and freedom as well as public ownership of the means of production.

Labour Britain resolutely engaging on the kind of policy I have outlined, which happens to be the only one compatible with our election pledges and Socialist principles, would ease the tension between the two world powers, heal, pacify and unite Europe and thereby create the conditions in which the liberal traditions of Europe will assert themselves, in and through the Communist Parties as well as the rest of the European community.

K. ZILLIACUS

House of Commons.

[Mr. Zilliacus seems not to have studied the two recent articles by Mr. Crossman in which he outlined the argument for the "third force." He expressly repudiated the idea of neutrality, arguing that any Western European group must be prepared to defend its independence. Stalin, on the evidence of Mr. Parkins' letter, does not accept the view that economic independence for Britain is a "phoney" idea. Mr. Crossman will reply in our next week's issue.—ED., *N.S. & N.*

SIR,—How far is Mr. Crossman's thesis a new version of old schemes for economic and strategic blocs and alliances? Is it directed at anyone else, or is it an attempt by a weak and failing people, afraid of social and economic change at home, to seek help from such allies as it can find? Are we being asked to make a military alliance with Benelux against the East? Or are we merely being invited to go into genteel retirement in a sort of Eventide Home for Europe, supported by discreet contributions from Mr. Marshall's International Assistance Board?

These are the questions which will be asked from both sides, and if they are not satisfactorily answered in the presentation of the plan it will earn suspicion and contempt from both East and West.

The value to Russia's security of her so-called satellites does not lie in their military strength, or in the distance they add to the trajectory of a guided missile. It lies in the dynamic will to live of the peoples of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, and in the momentum of their reconstruction against a background of suffering, patriotism and faith.

Crossman's plan for Western Europe can only be implemented if it envisages progressive economic integration with Eastern Europe too. Trade relations with Eastern Europe can only develop fully if no strategic considerations are involved. To attain anything more than year to year barter a political détente is first necessary. As far as the countries of Eastern Europe are concerned, this will only happen when they are convinced that Britain is going to survive as an independent nation, free of dollar domination.

This does not mean an abrupt change. Indeed one of the most interesting moments in our recent long conversation with Stalin was when, relaxing and leaning over the table, he said: "Were I an Englishman and, let us say, a member of the Labour Government, this is the course I would have followed:

"I would not have weakened the economic ties with the United States, I would have continued to maintain these ties. But at the same time I would have established connections with those countries which are in need of British equipment and which can deliver food."

We pointed out that so far we had not been able to look to the East since only the Western Hemisphere had been able to supply our needs since the war. He replied: "That is quite right, but that period is passing, if it has not already ended. The Soviet Union as well as other countries of Europe, which have goods to sell and which trade with each other, could deliver the goods which Great Britain needs.

"If this is not done, if Britain does not seek support simultaneously in the United States and in Europe, then things will go badly with her, and she will become weaker, and fall completely under the domination of America."

BEN PARKIN

House of Commons.

THE LITTLE ELECTION

SIR,—Now that the shouting and the tumult have died, it is of interest to analyse the figures of last week's three by-elections and to see what percentage swing away from Labour they, in fact, reveal. "Swing" is calculated by striking an average between the gain of the one and the loss of the other of the two parties at the top of the poll. The value of this way of measuring change is that it discounts the effect both of a variation of the size of the poll and of votes cast for third parties.

At Gravesend at the General Election there was a swing of 14.7 per cent to Labour from Tory. This was above the national average swing, which was 12 per cent, but below the average for North-West Kent, which was 22 per cent (and was the highest in the country outside Birmingham, where there was a swing of 23 per cent). At the by-election there has been a swing back to Conservative from Labour of 6.8 per cent—or less than half of the pro-Labour swing of 1945. The interesting lesson of Gravesend, however, is that the percentage Labour vote only fell by 0.7 per cent, while the percentage Tory vote rose by 12.9 per cent, the reason for the difference being the absence at the by-election of a Liberal candidate. In 1945, on the other hand, the Labour vote only rose by 8.6 per cent over 1935 figures but the Tory vote fell by 20.8 per cent. The reason again was that in 1935 there was no Liberal candidate while there was one in 1945. These two figures taken together strongly suggest that the bulk of the Liberal

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vote goes to the Conservative in the absence of a Liberal candidate.

Howdenshire, which was trumpeted as a great Tory victory by the Conservative press, showed, in fact, a somewhat smaller swing from Labour than that at Gravesend. Here the figure was only 6.15 per cent, although the swing to Labour in 1945 had been almost as great—14 per cent. Further, while there was a decline in the Labour percentage of 4.2 per cent, the Tory increase was only two-thirds of that at Gravesend, and, most significant of all, the Tories only managed to equal the percentage of the poll they achieved in 1935, while Labour was nearly 17 per cent up on its poll for that year.

When East Edinburgh is considered, the pattern becomes clearer. At the General Election in Edinburgh as a whole there was a swing of 11 per cent to Labour and in East Edinburgh itself of 7¼ per cent. At the by-election, the swing back was less than 1½ per cent, though the decline in the Labour poll—5.8 per cent—was greater than at Gravesend or Howdenshire. The reason for the small swing was that the National Liberal percentage declined by 3 per cent on the Conservative poll of 1945. By comparing the percentage figures of the General Election with the present by-election and with the by-election of October, 1945, when only Labour and Conservatives stood, it is clear that, as at Gravesend, a greater proportion of the Liberal votes goes to the Conservative.

From figures looked at in this way a number of interesting points emerge. First, in North-West Kent the Tories would seem to be in a worse position than they were in 1946 when the swing away from Labour at the Bexley by-election was 11 per cent. In any event, in order to win even a bare majority in the country the Tories would require a nation-wide swing in their favour of 8 per cent. Even if, therefore, they could achieve everywhere their Gravesend result they still could not win and East Edinburgh shows that the Gravesend swing is by no means universal. Further, as the Tory recapture at the General Election of Skipton and Eddisbury showed, by-elections exaggerate the swing against the Government.

On the other hand, there are some disquieting factors. It seems fairly clear that a good proportion of the Liberal vote goes to the Tory. But the Liberal vote is everywhere declining. In Howdenshire it was 48.8 per cent in 1929; 27.6 per cent in 1935; 14.9 per cent in 1945 and 10 per cent in last week's by-election. In these circumstances local Liberal Associations are likely to become progressively more unwilling to run candidates. Provided Labour could, as at Gravesend, hold its 1945 strength the going over of the entire General Election Liberal vote to the Tories would only give them 71 seats, but the real danger is that not only will the Liberal vote go to the Tories, but there will be, as at Howdenshire and at East Edinburgh, a decline in the total Labour percentage poll. If the Liberals went over completely, even a small decline in the Labour percentage would be fatal.

GEOFFREY BING

House of Commons.

CUCKOO CRY

SIR,—It is great to hear from Prof. Laski that what has hitherto been wheedled for the needy by charitable persons out of the tight-fisted of all classes, is now to be given them as justice. Let us hope his methods will not kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, however few.

Meanwhile, it would be interesting to know if any "charity" as yet seeps from the properous classes of the Bolshevist State into their labour battalions and if so, how soon it will reach the status of "justice." Would it be safe for the Orthodox Church to sponsor "charity" however cold, towards political prisoners? Albert Schweitzer who has given his life to medicine in Equatorial Africa says: "We are not free to confer benefits on these men, or not, as we please; it is our duty. Anything we give them is not benevolence but atonement." It is Prof. Laski not Schweitzer who is descended from Bumble. I hope he is really converted.

H. ALEXANDER

SIR,—Mr. Laski's outcry against charity is far too sweeping. He is entitled to object to collecting for charities on commission, and to the underpayment of nurses under plea of vocation; while his main point that charity is no substitute for justice will command common consent. It is, however, a plain fact that even the greatly enhanced social services of to-day are not adequate to provide for everyone's essential needs, and those who are painstakingly raising money to provide for marginal cases need the help of the public and not a sneer at the "sleek and often able officials who know almost to a decimal point the precise degree of deference owed to each member of their committees."

What is more important, young people, reading Mr. Laski's article might suppose that to have anything to do with "the charity mongers and all their works" is something out-moded and laughable. The fact is that in many directions private benevolence is still needed to supplement official services, and that it will be a sad day when young people are no longer given opportunities to contribute voluntarily from their modest means to help those less fortunate than themselves.

HOWARD DIAMOND

GREECE

SIR,—I should be grateful if you would allow me to address, through yourself, a few questions to the author of your article (under to-day's date) entitled "Something Must be Done in Greece."

The first two questions arise from his statement that "the head of the Communist Partisan leader, Ares Velouchiotis, whose band terrorised the Germans during the war, was exhibited for a week in the town of Trikkala in the autumn of 1945." The first question I should like to ask is this: What first-hand evidence had your correspondent that Ares' band was ever engaged against the Germans at any time? It may seem incredible, but despite considerable inquiry I have never been able to find any at all.

The second question is how Ares' head came to be exhibited in Trikkala some three to four months after it was cut off? I have a photograph taken of it in June, 1945, but I had never heard of it being pickled.

Homewood, Knebworth, Herts.

C. M. WOODHOUSE

[Our correspondent writes: "I am grateful for Mr. Woodhouse's correction of the date of Ares Velouchiotis' murder by Greek Right-wing forces—it occurred at the end of May, 1945, and not as I said in the autumn of that year. This, of course, is further proof of the point I made that Government forces broke the terms of Varkiza long before the Left began military reprisals. I am also grateful that Mr. Woodhouse did not deny that this atrocity took place. Mr. Woodhouse's other point—his innocent-seeming request for information and first-hand evidence of Ares' band ever engaging the Germans at any time—is somewhat too ingenuous.

Mr. Woodhouse must surely know that Ares was among the first to organise the armed resistance of the Greeks against the Germans, and later became the Capetanios of E.L.A.S. G.H.Q. in Central Greece. In November, 1942, Ares with his men, and Zervas with a smaller band, took part in the blowing up of the Giorgopotamos rail viaduct—a successful action cutting the Germans' rail communication between their middle European arsenal and the Mediterranean at a critical period of the war in North Africa. If Mr. Woodhouse has forgotten this action, there were British officers present, under Colonel Edward Myers, who would no doubt be pleased to refresh his memory. There is plenty of other first-hand evidence in Greece—though Mr. Woodhouse might be required to visit the more barren islands and a few evil-smelling prisons to get it at the moment. If he shudders at such things and is not pleased to inquire of Colonel Myers, there are plenty of books in English and Greek containing ample evidence with regard to Ares' efforts against the Germans.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

MR. MARTIN TURNELL deserves congratulations upon choosing Corneille, Molière and Racine as subjects for his new book, *The Classical Moment* (Hamish Hamilton, 12s. 6d.). Now that French has so largely replaced Greek and Latin in the baggage of educated men, English critics need to contribute all they can to our power of enjoying French. This task, fortunately, the best of them appear to find increasingly seductive. There are, none the less, many great French writers who still require to be recommended in English. The *grand siècle* (which lasted for only half a century) seems particularly to have alarmed us islanders. We urgently need studies of the superlatively subtle La Fontaine, the organ-voice of Bossuet, the tender Fénelon, the delicately incisive La Bruyère and—I must add, despite Mr. Turnell—the difficultly accessible Corneille.

Mr. Turnell prefaces his book with considerations upon the Seventeenth Century. During this period, he declares very happily, "English literature was a literature of *expansion*, and French a literature of concentration and *consolidation*." In the Middle Ages, indeed till the end of the Sixteenth Century, the differences between the cultures of England and France were superficial: the Pléiade and our Elizabethan lyrists used similar images to express similar feelings: and a friend of mine with paradoxical wisdom always advises any Frenchman who wishes to understand the English character to read Montaigne.

Two events made the two cultures diverge. First, the struggle between Catholics and Protestants ended here in the establishment of a Church comprehending the vast majority of each contending party, whereas the French, no less divided over this matter than the English, but too deeply religious to accept a compromise, at last decided to remain Papists. Secondly—and again in both countries it was "a nearest run thing"—absolute monarchy was defeated in our Civil War and was triumphant over the French Fronde. In the second half of the 17th Century, therefore, the contrast between the two societies (and their literatures) became pronounced. Mr. Turnell declares indeed that the English genius "for the next two hundred years set its face steadfastly against the Latin virtues"—a queer description of the period dominated by Dryden, Pope, Addison, Gibbon, Byron and Macaulay. Nor is the interesting distinction he emphasises between Donne and Racine altogether relevant, for the Englishman died eight years before the Frenchman was born. What is true is that the orthodoxy, æsthetic no less than political and moral, of the *grand siècle* was far stricter than anything known in England, either contemporaneously or when our Augustan Age took it as a model some forty years later. The narrowness of the *grand siècle*, therefore, often excites our claustrophobia. Its concentration should simultaneously excite our delighted gratitude. What English writer, then or later, has analysed the human heart with the profundity of Pascal, Racine, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère and Saint-Simon?

Of the three dramatists discussed in this book, Molière is much the easiest for us English to appreciate.

> "In Molière," wrote Sainte-Beuve in one of his memorable over-statements—"in Molière as in Montaigne we meet nature, but nature without any appreciable mixture of what belongs to the *order of Grace;* he was not touched at any period of his life, any more than Montaigne was, by Christianity." Discussions of the relative value of the three writers are fruitless, but Sainte-Beuve's *mot* helps to explain the popularity of Molière in this country—the country of Shakespeare—and the sad neglect of Corneille and Racine. The English reader is disconcerted by the world of France's two greatest tragic poets. He does not know what to make of the booming voices extolling *honneur* and *gloire* and exhorting him to acts of heroic virtue. He is no more at home in Racine's world which threatens to dissolve at any moment and to engulf its inhabitants in their own furious passions.

Mr. Turnell goes on to point out that where Corneille and Racine are general, Molière delights us by being particular. (A vastly wider vocabulary was thought permissible in comedy.) Most sympathetic to us is also the tragic note struck by Molière in his finest works. Harpagon, like Shylock, becomes so painfully distraught as to excite mixed emotions; our response to Alceste is so ambivalent as still to provoke controversy among those who cannot bear a comic writer not to be also a moralist. Rather in this spirit, I fear, Mr. Turnell devotes to *Le misanthrope* more than a third of his essay on Molière. His conclusion is that in it "Molière criticises his own standards. The urbanity and moderation of the *honnête homme* are felt to be insufficient." Is it not rather that candour, no less than hypocrisy, can be repulsive; and that Molière, having exploited the comic results of one quality in *Tartuffe*, exploited those of the other in *Le misanthrope?* In just the same way, I suggest, Ibsen exploited the tragic results successively of concealment and outspokenness in *Ghosts* and *The Wild Duck*.

Racine has lately become a favourite author with English readers: Lytton Strachey has prepared our minds, Baudelaire and Valéry have attuned our ears. The more one frequents Racine, the more intense one's admiration. He is the most passionate and most musical of French poets; and *Phèdre* is the most affectively theatrical of all dramas. In his thoughtful discussion of this play, Mr. Turnell does not so much as breathe the name of Euripides. "Phèdre's attempt to shift the blame for her downfall on to the gods," he says, "is the purest Jansenist doctrine, and it shows the weakness of that line as a guide to living." A doctrine Greek, before it was Jansenist (if it ever was): Racine, in his preface to the play, explains that Euripides has provided him with his idea of Phèdre, "engagée *par sa destinée, et par la colère des Dieux, dans une passion illégitime dont elle a horreur toute la première.*"

During the twenty-two years of his life after composing *Phèdre* Racine wrote no drama or verse except the two religious plays commissioned by Mme de Maintenon for her young ladies at Saint-Cyr. (Shakespeare and Rimbaud are, I fancy, the only other great poets thus to have abandoned their genius.) *Phèdre* excited hostile intrigues, and soon afterwards Racine was reconverted to the strictest piety. That this was cause and effect seems incredible. There is, however, the possibility that he got the fright of his life during the *drame des poisons*: this shook the Court to its heart by compromising Mme. de Montespan, and may have involved Racine also. Mr. Turnell might have referred to this as perhaps precipitating him back into the dour embraces of Port Royal.

Unluckily I must now turn to the thorny subject of Corneille, a subject to which Mr. Turnell gives only twenty-six pages, though we English need coaxing up to him much more urgently than to Molière or Racine. I doubt whether any but a few enviably bilingual Englishmen can come near to appreciating *Horace* or *Cinna*. Even in France Corneille is a monument more venerated than visited. Of recent years, however, there have been two notable attempts to revive him. First, the admirable Jean Schlumberger produced a book, half anthology, half commentary, called *Plaisir à Corneille* (Gallimard); then the brilliant, if unadmirable, Robert Brasillach, followed with *Pierre Corneille* (Fayard), a most enjoyable farrago of paradoxes. Both books sought to extirpate the traditional notion of Corneille, too narrowly founded upon *Le Cid, Horace, Cinna* and *Polyeucte*, as a severely classical, frigid, not to say *pompier*, exponent of Duty, Honour and Will. Indeed, Brasillach presented Corneille as a fascist whose spiritual home was the sinister, bedizened and sclerotic Byzantium, as a psychologist comparable with Mauriac in the perversity of his favourite subjects, with Shakespeare in the range of his imagination. Dante, Mallarmé, Verlaine, Claudel, and even Lautréamont are other parallels produced by this conjuror, so that the innocent reader might end by supposing Corneille to combine the exoticism of Loti with the fantasy of Cocteau and the mysticism of St. Teresa. This will never do. Corneille was deeply influenced by contemporary Spaniards as well as by the Ancients; he did write plays about Ethiopians, Byzantines, Huns and even ancient Scots, and he gave characters such names as Rodogune, Rodélinde, Octar, Grimoald and Garibalde. This, however, was his furthest concession to local colour; and Mr. Turnell, one fears, is probably right in returning to the depressing, conventional view: "He wrote heroic plays and it is as an heroic poet that he must stand or fall." Rather inconsistently, perhaps, we are told later on that Corneille's heroes are "the embodiment of all that was best in the middle class from which the poet came." Do they not rather embody all that the Renaissance thought best in the upper class of ancient Rome? In the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries classical antiquity enjoyed a prestige such as we now find it almost impossible to understand. Men of letters took for granted the infallibility of the Ancients, and thought to settle the most complicated issues by some reference to Horace or Cicero: "Roma locuta est; causa finita est." Unless we can make ourselves understand this notion of authority, even more alien nowadays in art than in theology, we must be bewildered not only by Corneille but by Montaigne, Burton and Pope.

A further difficulty confronts us. The Seventeenth Century intellect was usually blind to the antagonism between Christian and ancient Roman values. Corneille wrote one of his most famous tragedies about a struggle between Paganism and Christianity, but what divides Polyeucte from Pauline is only faith, not morals. Though Mr. Turnell writes with understanding of religion, he omits to mention that in the intervals of writing tragedies which exalt suicide (to theologians a sin more hideous than murder), Corneille poured forth a Niagara of religious verse, including a translation of *The Imitation of Christ* in some thirteen thousand lines.

Comparing the two great writers of tragedies, Mr. Turnell says very happily: "Corneille's characters are people *qui se construisent* and Racine's people *qui se défont*." Also: "Corneille's vocabulary was no smaller than Racine's, but it is probable that his language has less power of suggestion than that of any other great French poet. Words are scientific terms which mean exactly what they say." If this is true, what could be more damaging? This is why, disappointed with myself, and despite the best will in the world, I fail to enjoy Corneille. I would not for an instant seem to contradict M. Schlumberger, and indeed the practical unanimity of French critics. Corneille must be a great writer—but his verse is a wine that does not travel. All that reaches our hyperborean ears is a brassy plugging of high sentiments in a nerve-racking series of mechanical antitheses. As for the content, listen to M. Schlumberger, counsel for the defence:

> All too often I have found Corneille a stumbling-block. This insupportable grandiloquence that does everything to make grandeur suspect, these encumbering draperies, this Spanish tone, these points of honour, these arid ambitions, this immeasurable absence of pity, of kindness, of weakness, this obstinacy in proclaiming that one is right, this art which explains, which argues and which so seldom speaks in an undertone. Nor is this the worst: the desolating imprisonment of this poetry in conversations during twenty-four agitated hours in an antichamber. Not a door or window open on the world, no humanity outside, not a tree or a corner of sky on which to rest one's eyes; and in these personages entirely concentrated upon their conflicts never a thought of the past or the future, of their childhood or of the dead, never an opening upon the unknowable, never a disquietude about destiny.

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RAYMOND MORTIMER

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Dark Legend. A Study of Murder. By FREDERICK WERTHAM. *Gollancz.* 6s.
The Kingdom of the Lost. By J. A. HOWARD-OGDON. *Bodley Head.* 10s. 6d.

One of the very few remarkable books that found a way to England during the war was Wertham's *Dark Legend*. It was reviewed by me at the time (1942) in these columns. Dr. Wertham was, and is to-day, Senior Psychiatrist in the Department of New York Hospitals; he has given expert evidence in many murder trials; his book investigates the case of a young Italian who had killed his mother, and proceeds to a discussion of matricide in general. What is remarkable about it is not only its subject (inquiry into the nature of matricide being even rarer than the act itself), but the lucidity and persuasion of Dr. Wertham's findings. We are accustomed—we, the lay public—to pick up our psychological knowledge from the almost unreadable masters, whose last concern it is to convince you and me. They lay down the law; they dispute and divide; they elaborate gigantically; pell-mell, in the *argot* of analytics, their evidence cataracts round our ears. Having returned lately from a study—no, study implies too ordered a relation between the reader and the read—of Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*, I can doubly appreciate the limpid qualities of *Dark Legend*. Isn't its very readability, its fascination, suspect? Whatever the ultimate value of Dr. Wertham's "Study in Murder," it is a book that no intelligent person can read without feeling that something essential has been added to his or her stock of experience.

One third of the book is reporting: the murder (in a New York tenement), arrest, investigation, sentence (guilty but insane), Gino's story of his life taken down piece by piece in his own words: the latter a document of extraordinary, uneducated force. Then, Dr. Wertham's analysis of character and motive: this seems to me brilliantly conclusive. Then, the widening of the inquiry to discover patterns in mythology. The story of Orestes fits essentially. In both cases (the Greek princeling's and the New York slum-child's), there is a dead father, an adulterous mother, disinheritance, the bloody stabbing, pride in having avenged the family honour, immediate and public confession. An inflexible sense of duty has banished, till long after the event, any feelings of guilt; both stand trial, both are acquitted. Gino, quickly recovering his sanity, showed himself normal in every way. The unrecognised motive, here and in other cases cited by Dr. Wertham, is incestuous love.

An even closer parellel is provided by *Hamlet*; and here illumination astonishingly reaches two ways. We learn from the comparison more about Hamlet than we do about Gino, because there is so much more to learn. The corresponding details—uncle, voice of the father, delay, madness, railing at women, play scene, bedroom—chime irresistibly, with of course, the one great difference: that Hamlet didn't kill his mother. Why not? Because, says Dr. Wertham, Hamlet had an outlet, an exertion, in words. He talked, to himself, to his mother—*at* his mother, even when not there—endlessly. "Incestuous sheets . . . Nero's crime . . . I'll speak daggers to her but use none, etc." Gino, a baker's son, aged seventeen, had no daggers of speech. Craving dumbly, he reached for the bread knife.

Once this explanation of all that is curious in Hamlet's behaviour has been given, we may find it hard to believe that we haven't known as much all along. And so perhaps, in unformulated ways, we have. Dr. Wertham's analysis of *Hamlet* has been extended in an essay published separately which might well have been included as an appendix to the present edition. One result of studying his criticism—the most influential of its kind surely, since Bradley's—must be to make us wonder whether an "Orestes complex" is not the *malaise* peculiar to poetic genius.

A murder story, psychological detection, myth, taboo, insanity, literary creation: such are the stages of Dr. Wertham's exploring. *Dark Legend* may well, I feel, become a classic of its kind.

Dr. Wertham earns our gratitude as an explorer of tangled human motive. He makes out a clear case; he cured his patient. The second by no means follows. Deep analysis of neurotics may provide a crystallisation of knowledge, without relieving the individual sufferer; and the treatment of psychosis is frankly, and not always very encouragingly, experimental. Between the lunatic and his mentor there exists a gap which mere clinical insight cannot close. Some such phrase as "hallucinations of grandeur" or "he thinks he is Napoleon" dockets the experiences of schizophrenia and provides no clue. Here, from *The Kingdom of the Lost*, is the experience itself (it must be explained that the author, a schizophrenic, was going about his daily work during the war years in the kitchen of a lunatic asylum):

> The bigger sugar scopes represented an *aggregate* of siege guns. The trolleys were *aggregates* of tanks—or convoys according to need. . . . My own movements were variously symbolised—often as air-raids. These were quite impartially administered! One end of the store represented England, the other represented the Continent. Sweeping, scrubbing, polishing symbolised raids or battles. The crumbs that I swept up each day, when the ward rations had been fetched, represented planes, casualties, and bombs. The *condensation* "crumbs" and "crumps" is easily recognised. . . .
>
> Then the vast number of personal "displacements"—persons in immediate contact who seemed to represent others—usually leaders in the world conflict. . . . On the nursing staff were Morrison and Himmler, walking sweetly together. Many of my relations, found substitutes—quite good ones—there were plenty to choose from. I had Stalin, Brauchitsch, and Timoshenko in the same ward. My mother and my paternal grandmother (both long dead) used to visit me in the store from the women's side. . . . These even entered my dreams, thrown up from the deep pit of the Unconscious, then hurriedly drawn down again as the time of waking drew near.
>
> Quotations were dangerous, especially those from *Hamlet*, Donne's *Elegies*, and Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*. Anything from these sources was stimulus good enough to promote a powerful shattering dream.
>
> Once, à propos of nothing, just as I was going to sleep, I thought, "Methinks I see my father. . . ." and I was disturbed intermittently, throughout the night, by a monstrous "coloured still"—that is, a coloured, motionless image—of my father.
>
> Some kind of contact with these "displacements" was necessary for me to control the universe. As I had no Keitel, the big black kettle on the hob of the Villa range had to do duty for him. When I touched the kettle, I made contact with the man. . .

This generous dip into Mr. Howard-Ogdon's pages will give some idea of the interest and value attaching to his self-revelation. It is quite the most penetrating first-hand account of an insanity that I have come across; others (such as the late Thomas Hennell, in *The Witnesses*) have reported as vividly, but without Mr. Ogdon's power of analysis. He describes his illness through all its intricate phases, and gives also the usual hair-raising picture of an English lunatic asylum. He effected his own cure and escape. This unusually intelligent, well-written book makes it plain that even schizophrenia (commonly regarded as incurable) differs only in degree from "normality," and that in childish make-believe, dreams, fevers, poetic imagination, states of mind induced by alcohol or drugs, exactly the same forces are at work in exactly the same way. It makes use of primitive magic, taboo, and talisman. The difference, of course, between the schizophrene and the child or the poet is that the first has lost the ability to shoulder or shrug off what he imagines. His play is in deadly earnest. He can't, it seems, help himself. Yet even that powerlessness, with almost total inhibition in its final stages, is probably the result of a definite act of abdication.

G. W. STONIER

VARIATIONS ON THE CHINA THEME

The Shadow of a War. By JAMES BERTRAM. *Gollancz.* 18s.
China Awake. By ROBERT PAYNE. *Heinemann.* 15s.
Thunder Out of China. By THEODORE WHITE and JACOBY. *Gollancz.* 16s.

"Two themes, as always, predominated: suffering and heroism," James Bertram tells us in his autobiography of internment, *The Shadow of a War*. The suffering is now so familiar that most of us have built a defence mechanism against reading it. The heroism, James Bertram points out, is perhaps "more firmly marked and more deeply felt in that grey world behind barbed wire than anywhere in the moving clash of war." It is the heroism that he remembers and describes with beauty and restraint. Not that the mental and physical torture are overlooked, but they are integrated in the general picture. In Robert Payne's book *China Awake* pain and horror are isolated, since he is obsessed with the neurotic in all of us. James Bertram, an equally sensitive person, describes his experiences of the China war, followed by the hopeless fighting of the Hongkong Volunteers and the humiliation of surrender. He spent three years in the Stanley internment camp and another year in the even worse camp in Tokyo. He sees atrocities not as individual neuroses, but as "the symptoms and by-products of a whole social system and mental environment that lives on terror, and breeds monsters like Kramer and Tokuda just as dung breeds flies." We need to remember the bestialities of internment, but we need more to remember *why* it happened and what the "military-fascist set-up did to unspoilt young Japanese peasants and fishermen as well as to the victims war threw their way."

James Bertram is an artist of the between-war generation who left the comfort of a New Zealand university to make his contribution to the defeat of Fascism. Because he had deeply felt loyalties to the Chinese people he chose the Far East front, and the first part of his book describes the early days of the China Defence League. Mme. Sun Yat Sen was the pivot of all its activities. She inspired the devoted service to China of an international circle which included Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, the then British Ambassador, Dr. and Hilda Selwyn-Clarke, who, like James Bertram, endured years of internment, Rewi Alley, a New Zealander and the hero of the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives, and three staunchly democratic Americans—Edgar Snow, Evans Carlson and Ida Pruitt. The Japanese war dispersed the group, but most of them still share James Bertram's loyalties to China and believe, as Mme. Sun Yat Sen said to him when he returned from internment, "It is here that the battle is still being fought—the battle that was not decided with the defeat of Japan."

Robert Payne spent some years of the war in Chinese universities, and it is mainly the life of the student and professor that he describes. We meet the leaders of the Democratic League, in those difficult days of 1944–45 when it was already clear that Chiang Kai-shek was already preparing for war against the Communists. The most distinguished Democratic League member, Wen Yi-Tuo, to whom the book is dedicated, has since been assassinated and the Kuomintang has just banned the organisation. Robert Payne helps us to understand the conditions of progressive work in China and the responsibility of foreign friends to give its heroes every support. Again and again they appear in his Diary. They are the mature, the politically conscious, those who are most jealous of China's civilised tradition. They are often nostalgic for the ivory towers of a less tormented age. And they are often too hungry and too cold to think of anything but the problem of survival in the spiral of China's lunatic inflation.

Robert Payne, himself a poet, dramatises every experience. This is perhaps the weakness of the book which is written as a personal Diary; not

every experience, even in the tense dramatic days of 1944 until the end of the war, is worth recording. There is a certain unbalance; to dramatise trivialities is to risk melodrama. But in such incidents like the one where the murder of the students by the secret police is described, no one has given a more vivid picture of the courage of resistance and the cruelty of reaction than Mr. Payne.

There is none of the restraint of James Bertram and none of the poetry of Robert Payne in *Thunder Out of China*. Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby, the authors, are hot-gospel politicians by comparison. Both were on the Chungking staff of *Time*, and both were honest writers who told what to them was the truth about China. Cities reek with opium; the officials and gendarmes beat, whip, torture and humiliate the peasants. Everything is high-lighted like a March of Time film. These two writers were impressed by China! They liked the "fine ancient noises—squealing pigs, bawling babies, squawking hens, gossiping women, yelling men and the eternal singsong chant of coolies." They liked the Chinese peasants, "born in the Middle Ages to die in the twentieth century." And if they had been just high-powered American journalists, their exclamatory writing would have tired out any leisurely reader. But they were honest observers whose political sense matures as the Chinese calamity develops from a half-hearted war against the Japanese to an enthusiastic onslaught of the Communists. They have the courage of their convictions, although their enthusiasm sometimes takes charge of their judgment. And they have the simple-minded arrogance common to many American writers who have described the Indian situation. Thus the British have a "total inability" to think in terms of "realism—realism being more than military realism, it being political, psychological, economic realism." Our two American critics forecast a horrible future in India and in Burma.

These two warm-hearted journalists felt more at home in the happy-go-lucky Saturday evening dances at the Communist army headquarters. They liked these "simple earthy men" who possessed "a stubborn, irreducible realism," though they sometimes found "a slight tinge of sanctimoniousness" which reminded them of "the religious summer camps where people go about clapping each other on the back in rousing pious good-fellowship."

In the last two chapters Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby are brave enough to talk about "China and the Future." "Within our time," they tell us, "she must transfer half a billion people from the world of the Middle Ages into the world of the atomic bomb." They proceed to outline America's alternative policies in this jet-propelled performance. When the revolution is successful they want America to be regarded as a friendly State. They want the revolution to have a minimum of violence and bloodshed and the rights of minorities to be preserved. They also hope that journalists of the "outer world" may be able to report it. Their conclusion is that America's policy should be to encourage a multi-party government which, in their view, depends on "a prior understanding between the Soviet Union and the United States of America."

DOROTHY WOODMAN

NEW NOVELS

Under the Volcano. By MALCOLM LOWRY. *Cape.* 9s. 6d.

The Light and the Dark. By C. P. SNOW. *Faber and Faber.* 10s. 6d.

The House by the Sea. By JON GODDEN. *Michael Joseph.* 9s. 6d.

Any assessment based on a single reading of so elaborately conceived a novel as *Under the Volcano* must be tentative. Certainly no other novel as ambitious as this story of the last day in the life of a dipsomaniac has appeared this year. It was under a volcano, the drunken hero Geoffrey Firmin reminds us, that the ancients placed Tartarus. The volcano that dominates the landscape of the novel—Mexico, by now one of the more familiar of the seedier slums of modern writing—is Popocatepetl; Firmin is one of the damned, one of the damned, moreover, who might have saved himself but cannot be bothered to. It is the index of Mr. Lowry's success that we are fully persuaded as, with his ex-wife and his step-brother, we accompany Firmin through his drunkard's day, follow him from cantina to cantina in a nightmare bus, pursue him when he escapes his loving keepers (for that is how he sees them) through a nightmare jungle to the last cantina of all, where he is finally and casually shot by local fascists, that he is worth saving. Mr. Lowry, in other words, has written a genuinely tragic novel of great concentration and power.

Yet one is not entirely satisfied. Mr. Lowry's characters and his method come to us with too many associations clinging to them. Firmin himself, British consul in a small Mexican town until the 1914 war, whose naval career seems to have ended in dubious circumstances, has been for years on the point of writing a book on Atlantis. He still loves the woman who has divorced him out of hopelessness and who on the morning of the last day comes back to him once again to try and save him from himself; but he might very well have said:

I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it
Since what is kept must be adulterated?

His dipsomaniac visions and delusions are highly sophisticated, compounded among other things of reminiscences of and quotations from Marlowe, Raleigh, Donne, De Quincey ("that mere drug addict,") Baudelaire, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, with some of whom we are lulled into identifying him. One can scarcely avoid feeling that Mr. Lowry is using the associations of modish Lit. to jack up his tragic conception of his hero. Then there are the other characters: Yvonne, his wife, a star in Westerns in the silent days who has later failed in Hollywood as the "Boomp Girl"; and her lovers, Firmin's step-brother Hugh, a newspaperman and a failed dance-tune writer from the purlieus of Fitzrovia who is haunted by guilt that expresses itself in an obsession with the fate of the Spanish Government forces on the Ebro; and Laruelle, a friend of Firmin's childhood, a once-famous French film director who has failed in Hollywood and now dreams of making a film on the *Faust* legend. All, including Firmin, are members of cosmopolitan Bohemia, failures in the arts, expatriates. One has met them before in the novels of Djuna Barnes, Conrad Aiken, Kay Boyle and the other Paris-Americans. They are firmly and brilliantly drawn; their progress is inevitable; but they never surprise; they behave always according to the pattern that the conventions of *avant-garde* fiction impose upon them in the twenties.

Similarly with Mr. Lowry's style and method. His style is—one says it with all respect—out of Djuna Barnes by Henry James. As for method, he uses almost every technical device known to the experimental novel, and he uses them with great skill. The book has obviously been worked over and over with the most prolonged and loving care until every possibility of symbolism that situation and setting allow has been fully brought out. In the end, so much symbolism seems to come a little too pat; and, while it makes for an agonising concentration of the tragedy, together with the other factors of characterisation, style and method it makes also for an inescapable impression of pastiche. The

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total effect is much more than that of pastiche alone; but how much happier one would feel about this novel, impressive though it is, if one were not so conscious at every page of its literary sources.

All the same, it makes most contemporary novels appear slack and unconsidered. It certainly shows up *The Light and the Dark* for what it is. According to its publishers, this is one "of a great sequence of novels, each self-contained and complete, in which the author draws the portrait of his times, through the varied experiences of Lewis Eliot." Its hero, Roy Calvert, is a young Cambridge don of brilliant attainments. He is wealthy. He is a fine cricketer: "When he first came up, people had thought he might get into the university team, but he used to make beautiful twenties and thirties against first-class bowling, and then carelessly give his wicket away." He's handsome too; a meaning glance, and even the nicest woman climbs into bed immediately. But he suffers from the condition known as the dark night of the soul, which in his case manifests itself as melancholia. He is cast out of God. He seeks refuge in work, women and drink; for a time he thinks he has found God in Hitler. In the end, during the war, he gives up his job as a civil servant, and becomes a bomber pilot in order to get himself killed.

I regret to say that I did not believe a word of it. Mr. Snow writes with great assurance and facility. His extraordinarily garrulous narrator, Lewis Eliot, gives us the inside dope on any number of things: on the senior common room of a Cambridge College ("I hope you like marsala on a cold night. I'm rather given to it myself as a change. I find it rather fortifying."); on the Manichaean heresy; on the English aristocracy and their stately homes (pure Disraeli, this); on Monte Carlo; on Berlin in 1938 (discussions on social democracy with a Nazi cabinet minister); on the higher ranks of the civil service in wartime ("It was fun to go with the Minister to see a new weapon put into production.") God takes His place among all these. Unfortunately, Roy Calvert carries rather less conviction than a Ouida guardsman. How can he do otherwise when we are never allowed into his mind but must always approach it through the all-knowing narrator? *The Light and the Dark* is, quite simply, not the masterpiece of the year, as has been claimed, but the most pretentious novel of the year. It is pretentious because it attempts the most serious subject a novelist can tackle without the necessary sensibility or adequate technique. Henry James had a word for this sort of work. He said: "It pretends to persuade the soul while it slights the intellect; because it pretends to gratify the feelings while it outrages the taste."

With *The House by the Sea* we return to the serious and the considered. A most interesting and original first novel, it is the story of a frustrated spinster of early middle age who after a nervous breakdown following a lesbian relationship of some years' duration goes to live in a remote house on the Cornish coast during the later phase of the war. She has scarcely been there more than a day before she finds herself sheltering an American Army deserter, a killer. The novel is exciting in its own right; but the action and the killer exist primarily as means towards Miss Godden's masterly and gradual exposure of her pathetic heroine's mind. Not till the end of the novel are the last details that complete her character revealed. Miss Godden is not, I think, always careful about probability, but the intensity of her imagination is such that she creates her own original illusion. It is a most moving novel.

WALTER ALLEN

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Maurice to Temple. By MAURICE B. RECKITT. *Faber.* 16s.

Sociology of Religion. By JOACHIM WACH. *Kegan Paul.* 30s.

Mr. Reckitt's study of the social movement in the Church of England from Maurice to our own time is almost everything that such a book should be. It has, to begin with, that prerequisite for memorability, a firm and rapidly established point of view. Even such a comparatively recondite subject as this needs something more in the treatment than mere information, and though intelligently informative, *Maurice to Temple* is also written directively. This is not for a moment to suggest that we are subjected to the nagging voice of a propagandist, but only that the book is given its necessary unity by the writer's unmistakable attitude towards his subject. The judgments are modest, but they are also firm.

Mr. Reckitt has an admirable talent for vitalising figures which, it must be admitted, have acquired for us a thick coating of must. How intimately, for instance, Stewart Headlam appears before us, deprived of four consecutive curacies in the eighties for the amazing courage and freedom of his views. How lovable, how brave and how intelligent they were, Maurice, Headlam, Gore, Scott-Holland—and how forgotten! Not forgotten, of course, by those in the Church of England who are still living in their tradition, but forgotten by the social reformers of our time and abjured by our dominant theology. As Mr. Reckitt delightfully writes of the Christian social movement in the nineties:

> Even its theology, dismissed as "a snug Incarnationalism", is something of a scandal to a generation of Neo-Thomists and Neo-Calvinists. That we should be thankful for the Grace sufficient to enable us to walk without despair through a vale of tears—that is only proper. But that Christians should once have been grateful merely for the opportunity of experiencing the journey and enjoying the scenery is apt to seem to the contemporary orphans of so many storms, if not a little shocking, at least distinctly odd.

Clearly Mr. Reckitt is out of sympathy with both Maritain and Barth, though one may suspect in him a more definite distaste for the Protestant than for the Catholic theologian. But it is a snobbery, not only of modern theology but of many secular views on art and life, to equate pessimism with profundity, to deny Hope, despair of Charity and elevate Faith to an almost hysterical supremacy. The theology of Mr. Reckitt and his heroes is no less profound than the epicurean despair of God's proximity which is indulged in by the extreme Barthians. Indeed his principal concern is to show that such figures as Maurice and Scott-Holland were far indeed from the facile heresy of mere Works. Rather they were occupied in extending the whole field of theology as a weapon for interpreting and working upon the new field of industrial society. In fact to talk of a snug incarnationalism is merely an irritating and quite unperceptive attack on what was in reality a profound Christian humanism. The Incarnation is the ultimate guarantee

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that Christianity will not forget the hope of Man and the God-created dignity of Man. There was seldom a time when both were in greater danger of being forgotten, by Christians no less than by non-believers.

Quite unlike Mr. Reckitt, Professor Wach treats his gigantic and unwieldy subject with a caution barely distinguishable from cowardice.

At first blush we notice a definite influence of social differentiation and stratification upon the expression of religious experience. A harmony obtains between the social position of the more humble folk and the simplicity of their faith and worship, while the well-to-do are inclined in like manner to sponsor more elaborate ritual and more costly demonstrations of their devotion. These conclusions, however, like most generalisations, deserve to be taken *cum grano salis*. Puritanic motives may restrain and limit display and ritual beyond what is considered essential, or even just, in aristocratic circles; while the poorer peasant population and the underprivileged classes in all religions frequently have been known to insist not only on unusually meticulous fulfilment of the minutiæ of ritual prescriptions and proscriptions but also on as lavish a service to the deity as they can possibly afford.

Thus in a most typical passage this most impartial and most unreadable of scholars. Seldom can so many pages have said so little and, one may anticipate, to so few. On the one hand we must guard against this and on the other we must avoid falling into the exaggerations of that, until nothing remains in the still centre but those bare platitudes which should be, not the material, but the starting point for such a study as this.

In this field, as perhaps in any field of scholarship, the books which we value are those written out of passion and a point of view. In so far as we feel ourselves able to arrive at some notion of the truth, it is by studying a dialectical process, passion opposing passion, one point of view correcting another. It is not by the sort of cautious syncretism which leads to nothing being said at all. Müller, Lang, Frazer, Elliot-Smith, Malinowsky, Ruth Benedict: the great students of religion and society form almost a neat causal chain of attitude and reaction. The philological interpretation was countered by the "All-Father" theory; the "Egyptism" of Elliot-Smith defied the vegetation theory of Frazer. Frazer's whole horizontal method of investigation has been challenged by the detailed vertical field-work of Malinowsky and Ruth Benedict. Even Briffault's great, mad book, *The Mothers*, provides a challenge which must be answered. Truly disinterested investigation, of which Malinowsky is perhaps a practitioner, must at least investigate, must reveal new facts. I have not discovered a single novelty either of fact or attitude in this laborious yet grossly superficial work by Professor Wach. PHILIP TOYNBEE

MAN IN A LAUGHING MASK

Sheridan. By LEWIS GIBBS. *J. M. Dent.* 15s.

At the age of twenty-nine the author of *The Rivals*, *The School for Scandal* and *The Critic* threw over the stage—though drawing substantial profits from his management of Drury Lane—to embark upon thirty-six years of brilliant disappointment in politics. Naturally he expected the same success in the House of Commons that he had won in the theatre. Too frequently he obtained it; but mere theatrical success in politics can never lead to the rewards and honours of office, and Sheridan, the wit, could play for no other. As a politician he may be said to have made a good actor, but—as Pope said—"the life of a wit is a warfare upon earth." If he had not resigned with Fox at the death of Rockingham, if he had gone over to the Tories with Burke, if he had accepted Independent office under Addington or even a peerage from the Prince Regent—there are many such "ifs." But Sheridan by his strange devotion to the Whig party *as such*, by friendship for Charles James Fox, and by those minor loyalties which the Prince Regent described as "certain conscientious scruples which perpetually made against his own interests" (support of Catholic Emancipation and of the Princess Caroline cost him the patronage of "Prinny") was doomed never to reach the premiership attained later by a similar "literary adventurer," the novelist Disraeli. Byron could see this. "Pay no attention," he wrote to Moore:

> to the lies of the humbug Whigs—there were worse people than Sheridan in that gang. Fox with his coalition and Burke with his pension had not half Sheridan's principle. He was too good for them all.

Mr. Gibbs makes much of one handicap in Sheridan's career his lack of birth and money. Yet, though he may have been scorned by people like Lady Charlemont (who once described members of the House of Commons as "creatures looking so little like gentlemen and so much like hairdressers"), he was regarded as an equal, and even feared, by those who mattered. As to his debts, his thriftlessness, his lack of a regular income—there are many legends, but the trouble seems to have been a carelessness in arrangement rather than a lack of money. He was extravagant; he lived almost solely on his theatre, which at the same time he heavily mortgaged; his regular election expenses came to about £2,000 in bribes; the directors of the Bank of England ran from the room on his coming to open the Navy Account; his corpse was formally arrested for debt; but despite all this he died owing only £5,000 as compared with Pitt, who, with all his sinecures and his salary as head of the State, left debts of over £40,000.

Indeed the most damning indictment of Sheridan is probably contained in Fox's sarcastic: "Motley's his only wear." The sharp tongue which countered Pitt's taunts at the manager of Drury Lane, the theatrical tricks in debate, the oratory of the Warren Hastings trial (he had no personal feeling against Hastings, he was careless enough to remark later), the gift for intrigue which finally spiked the Whigs' chances of office under the Regency—all these had the effect of destroying confidence in Sheridan rather than increasing it. He had no gift for action; he was all flash and fireworks. Fox could tolerate and use him, but to smaller men like Grey and Grenville he was too dangerous. Here Mr. Gibbs points the moral that brilliance will not take the place in politics of a certain solidity. So the physician's son, mediocre Addington, could become Prime Minister, but not witty Sheridan, never formally recognised by his own party as second to Fox, though that was the part he played during most of his career. JOHN WALLER

Alias—William Shakespeare. By CLAUD W. SYKES. *Aldor.* 15s.

Here is yet another book that seeks to prove that Shakespeare did not write the works attributed to him. Mr. Sykes decides that the poet must have studied at Cambridge, fought in a war, visited France, Italy and Denmark. Odd, you may think, that anyone who has been to the low-lying castle of Elsinore should talk of "the dreadful summit of the cliff that beetles o'er his base into the sea." Little do such details matter provided we can clean the Bard from the fearful disgrace of being a tradesman's son. For the new candidate, like his predecessors Verulam, Oxford and Derby, is of course a peer. Roger Manners, fifth Earl of Rutland, is the nobleman Mr. Sykes has plumped for. He was born in October 1576, and was therefore only fifteen when *Henry VI, Part I*, was produced. We may adduce in favour of his authorship the fact that the word "manners" occurs over sixty times in Shakespeare, the word "bacon" only four

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ROBERT HALE

times. Mr. Arthur Bryant contributes a preface in praise of "this absorbing, erudite and ingenious book," though he wisely abstains from committing himself to its conclusions.

If for our part we persist in believing that *Hamlet* was written by a mere commoner, it can be attributed to our Left Wing bias. At the same time we recommend writers of Mr. Sykes's character to turn their attention from Shakespeare to Webster, about whom we know incomparably less. Ben Jonson, after all, knew Shakespeare and never doubted his authorship. Nobody is recorded as having known Webster; he was the son of a tailor, but his birth, his marriage, if he did marry, and his death are all unchronicled. His two great tragedies are laid in the highest circles, and so evidently could not have been written by a tailor's son. For our part we fancy that their author must have been at the least a Cardinal.

The History of Japan. By KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE. *Macmillan.* 20s.

This book is a revised edition of the author's *The Development of Japan*, which was first published in 1918. Dr. Latourette, who is Professor of Missions and Oriental History at Yale, has done an admirable job of compression, and has managed in less than 300 pages to present the main facts of Japan's history with praiseworthy objectivity. The brief concluding chapters, dealing with the war and subsequent occupation, are necessarily somewhat tentative. Unlike some other American writers, Dr. Latourette does not, however, attempt to minimise the part played by the British Commonwealth in the winning of the Far Eastern war. This history can be highly recommended to all those who, without going into too much detail, wish to obtain an accurate and unbiased picture of the events leading up to the present situation. Teachers of history should find it particularly useful.

A CORRECTION

The name of our reviewer of *Prehistoric Britain* in last week's issue was incorrectly printed. The correct name is Stuart Piggott.

Week-end Competitions

No. 928

Set by T. C. Worsley

The usual prizes are offered for a Grace to be said before Christmas dinner.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 925

Set by Thomas Smallbones

The headmaster of a progressive school is leaving. The usual prizes are offered for the closing 150 words of his last speech to his pupils.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

There were those who took it quite seriously; those who were ironic about those who take it seriously; and those who simply mocked. The first approach is too difficult on cold paper: only Mary Drewery, W. H. Victory and Guy Kendall came near. Irony at the simplehearted is almost equally difficult if you care about avoiding the heavy-handed. The last group was the largest as it is the most obvious. Most, much too much so. A surprising number sent their Heads on to Eton as if that is a soft option; some consigned him to Borstal. From this group I should like to have found room for Wriglet, Maurice Cassell, Joan Peters and Richard Pomfret. As it is I award two guineas each to Sonson and S. W. Green; one guinea to Fergie and half a guinea consolation prize to S. A. Cooper and Stanley J. Sharpless.

One final word to anyone who may still be listening to me: for God's sake don't pester me with letters asking for testimonials when you start looking for a job. In the first place, I always tell the truth, and this might ruin you. Secondly, most employers have been conditioned to take notice only of testimonials from the orthodox flogging institutions through which they themselves were dragged thirty and forty and fifty years back. Thirdly, in the world you will be entering there is an exaggerated respect for the forced acquirement of elaborate and largely meaningless conventions, misnamed knowledge or culture, and for willingness to truckle to those in authority, misnamed discipline. The job you are after will therefore probably go in any case to someone possessing these unnatural attainments. Console yourself with the thought that an unfettered personality is worth more than the highest reward of a shackled society.

S. W. GREEN

Och, shut up a minute will ye! I want to talk to ye. Ye all know I've been asked to go and re-educate America and I know ye'll continue to carry on wi'oot me just like you always do anyway. But before I go I wish the blighter who pinched my pet pair of pliers would return 'em, I *might* even consider swapping my sweet ration.... Whoever has my copy of Practical Economics can keep it, it's no' so practical as a' that. Ach, Weel I'll miss ye' all a lot, bless ye, and I hope ye'll write to me if any of you can write.

SONSON

I have heard the distinction drawn that Eton produces snobs, while Harrow produces prigs. What are you?

It is my boast that you, too, can be described in a four-letter word. Not snob (though you are that). Not prig (though you are that). But another.

I have made you so, to fit you for life in the world of to-day. Self-expression. Self-assertion. Self-projection. Self-fulfilment.

No knowledge, no scholarship, no technique. If you leave here with any technique, conceal it, or you'll become a technician, like any County school product; or an expert, fagging for the self-boy at a quarter of his salary.

Go in and win. I leave you now.
I have done my work.
I have done my work too well.
I hate the sight of you.

FERGIE

"The day I stood in Billy Smith's private study," Dr. Mancey-Payte went on, "as nervous as any other new Guider, one of the helpful things he told me out of the unspoilt pristine wisdom of his ten years was that I should look back on this period as the happiest of my life.

"All of you, including those few who, having taken reading and writing as interesting subsidiary subjects, were able to send the Board such favourable end-of-term reports on me, will understand when I say how true those words have proved.

"It only remains for me—and here I am joined by the rest of the staff, particularly Mr. N'Swazulu, the Language Guider, and the pontoon coach, Mr. Spivlick—to heartily congratulate you on the freedom from hidebound tradition you have drawn up your curriculums with and to unreservedly applaud the spirit of spontaneous self-expression you have pursued them in."

S. A. COOPER

Well, spivs (laughter and cheers), I'm glad to say my new job as adviser in child psychology to Lollipops Inc. will have even less to do with teaching than my headship here at Springvale. But I shan't forget you blokes and blokesses; you've been a stimulating bunch and I'm giving you each an autographed copy of Forever Amber as a leaving present.

Treat your new head as you've treated me (cries of "leave it to us"), with that experimental brand of philosophic anarchism that is our substitute for the old school tie. Always remember the Springvale motto: "No one teaches me with impunity." I hope this school will go on being imaginative enough to accommodate swots and drones, pansies and tough guys, introverts, extroverts and perverts, all mooching shoulder to shoulder. Now I see the captain of eurythmics signalling that my time's up, so—good cribbing!

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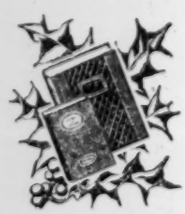

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BRITISH Electricity Authority. Public Relations Officer. Applics. invited for post of Public Relations Officer in Secretariat of the Authority with headquarters in London. Starting sal., commensurate with qualifics., will be paid within a sal. scale of £1,500, rising by annual increments of £50 to £2,000 p.a., subject to deductions for superannuation. Candidates should have ability to conduct a public information service, including press relations work, advertising, posters, films and pamphlets. Applics., which will be acknowledged & treated as confidential, to be sent within 14 days to the Director of Establishments, British Electricity Authority, Portland Ct., 170a, Great Portland St. W.1.

THE Society of Civil Servants invites applics. for full-time post of General Secretary at salary within range of £1,100×£50—£1,400. Comm. salary according to qualifics. Appointment is subject to a period of probation appropriate to exp. and qualifics. of selected candidate and terminating not later than May 31, 1949. During period of probation the selected candidate will serve under present General Secretary and on satisfactory completion of probation will become General Secretary. Post is permanent and pensionable. Applicants will be reqd. to undergo medical exam. The General Secretary is the principal salaried officer of the Society, which has a membership of about 23,000 in middle and higher grades of the Service. He is responsible for conduct of negotiations on the Society's behalf and for supervision of the Society's office and is a representative on the National Whitley Council. Negotiating ability is essential; knowledge of Civil Service and exp. of staff association work very desirable, but applicants without such knowledge and exp. will be considered if other qualifics. are exceptionally suitable. Candidates should give partics. of age, sex, educational qualifics., present and previous employments, and exp. of Civil Service conditions and Whitley machinery. Applics., which should include names and addresses of three persons to whom ref. can be made, tog. with copies of any testimonials, should be addressed to General Secy., 1, Sanctuary Buildings, Westminster, S.W.1, by Jan. 17, 1948.

ASSISTANT Secretary (Organising) reqd. by Society of Civil Servants, representing 23,000 members in middle and higher grades. Negotiating as well as organising ability essential. Knowledge of Civil Service and exp. in staff association or Whitley work desirable but not indispensable. The Society may appoint at the same time another Assistant Secretary primarily for negotiations for which knowledge of the Service and of staff association work are more necessary. Salary scale for these posts according to qualifics. and exp., but starting pay not less than £500 p.a., rising to not less than £750 p.a. Appointments become permanent and pensionable on satisfactory completion of a year's probation. A medical exam. will be necessary. Apply by Jan. 17, 1948, to General Secretary, 1 Sanctuary Buildings, Westminster, S.W.1, stating age, qualifics., present and previous employment, names and addresses of three refs. and enclosing any testimonials.

MINISTRY of Education. Applics. from men and women invited for post of Librarian in Ministry of Education. Appointment will be on temporary basis, but it is intended that it should be for period of 3 yrs. with possibility of extension. Candidates should pref. be between 30/45 years of age; they must be Fellows or Associates of Library Association, or must possess a Univ. Diploma in Librarianship and have practical exp.; they should normally have a Univ. degree and a knowl. of at least 2 modern languages. Educational exp. will be regarded as an important qualific. Sal. scale: Men, £800×£25—£965; women, £675×£25—£800. Further partics. and applic. forms, to be returned completed by Dec. 31, from the Secretary (Establishments and Organisation Branch), Ministry of Education, Curzon Hse., Curzon St. W.1.

OXFORD University Tutorial Classes. Applics. invited for post of full-time tutor in North Staffordshire District of W.E.A., including teaching on residential courses at Wedgwood Memorial College. Tutor will be reqd. to teach one of the following: Economics, Politics, Modern History. Comm. salary £450 to £600, according to qualifics. and exp. Partics. from Secy., Rewley House, Wellington Sq. Oxford. Closing date Dec. 20.

B.B.C. invites applics. for post of Sub-Editor, Near East Service, at Aldenham. Duties will include contact with Arab cultural and social activities in London, writing of reports on those activities for incorporation in news bulletins broadcast to the Arab countries and some share in the preparation of these bulletins. A thorough knowledge of current developments and personalities in Near East is essential. Knowledge of Arabic would be an adv. Salary rising by annual increments of £40 to max. £890 p.a. Detailed applics. to Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, marked "Near East N. Stm.," within 7 days. For acknowledgement enclose s.a.e.

EXPERIENCED women leaders reqd. for mixed youth clubs, to work in co-operation with men leaders. One post residential. Apply, with copies of testimonials, to: Organising Sec., Feathers Clubs Assoc., 29 Mulready St. Marylebone, N.W.8.

WANTED, Jan., Piano Teacher. Resid. post. Pref. someone young, gd. musician essential. Beltane School, Melksham, Wilts.

Appointments Vacant—continued

A.S.S.E.T. reqs. Divisional Officer for Northern England. Sal. £520 p.a. by 3 increments to £624. Applics. with partics. of education, trade union and industrial exp., should be forwarded to the General Secy., Assoc. of Supervisory Staffs, Executives and Technicians, 110 Park St. W.1, by Dec. 20.

THE Fabian Society reqs. a full-time Assistant to Secretary of the Local Societies Committee. Must be shorthand-typist and willing to take responsibility. Interesting and important work. Sal. £4 12s. 6d. Four weeks' holidays p.a. and 1 Saturday in 4 free. Applics. to Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St. S.W.1.

CHELTENHAM Grammar School. Wanted for January, a master to teach English throughout School. Good degree desirable. Apply as soon as possible to the Headmaster.

WANTED for group of about 12 children, senr. and jr. Nrse/two friends co-operating. Separate applics. considered. Box 163.

ORGANISING Secretary wanted for fund raising Jewish Women's Organisation. Only those with initiative, exp. and real ability need apply. Comm. salary £400 p.a. Box 465.

PETERBOROUGH Joint Education Board. Applics. invited for post of Youth Leader and Camp Warden to act as Leader to clubs in the Joint Board's area and to conduct camps and other summer activities. Candidates should have had successful exp. of work among young people and should be energetic, adaptable and keen on pioneer work. A knowledge of crafts would be an additional recommendation. Salary will be in accordance with Burnham Scale for teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools. Applic. forms from Leslie Tait, Chief Education Officer, Educ. Offices, Town Hall, Peterborough, to be returned by Dec. 31.

WANTED, January, Girls' Leader Mixed Club, with similar exp. Write: Warden, Bishop Creighton House, 378 Lillie Rd. Fulham, S.W.6.

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Appointments Wanted

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